BALLET today

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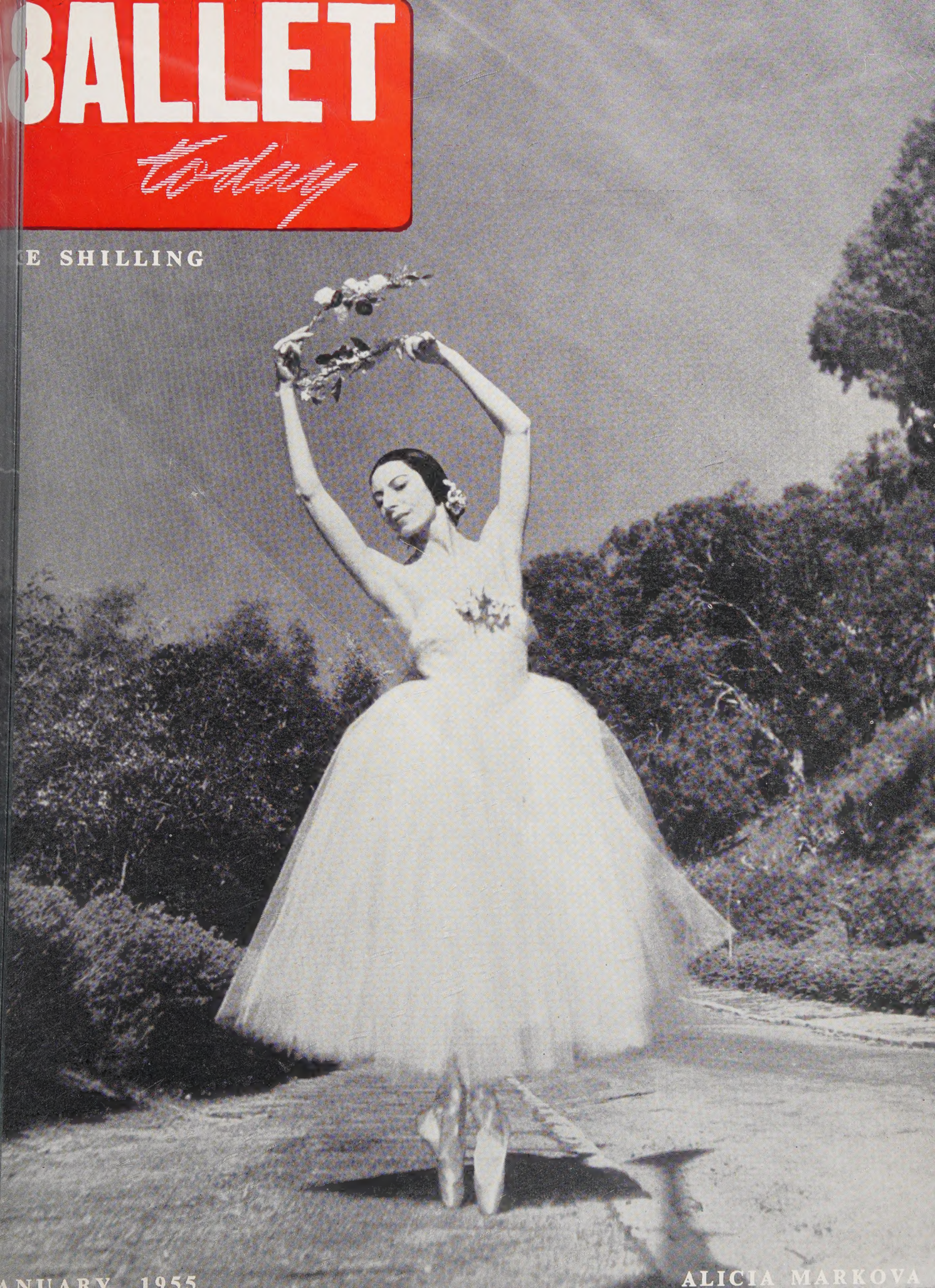

ANUARY 1955

ALICIA MARKOVA

Photo: Mike Davis

BERIOSOVA

Peter Craig-Raymond has contributed to the January issue an exclusive article on Svetlana Beriosova, the young, lovely and brilliant new ballerina who has so suddenly become important to English ballet.

This issue also contains fiction, beauty and fashion articles, and features on show-business, hobbies, personalites and other topics, near to the heart of the intelligent teen-age girl.

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Ballet Today

Editor : PETER CRAIG-RAYMOND

I want to emphasise the "new" in new year...

MODERN dance, the escape valve of the 20s, made the initial mistake of all destructive revolutionaries. So quickly inflamed were its pioneers that they discarded the classical dance before discovering some substitutable technical equipment of comparable range. The discovery that the technics of their revolt were flat-footed forced the moderns against the wall. Since then they have become hard-faced zealots of a lost cause. A few only saw that the way out was to make a personalized dance without recourse to labels.

The constant rebuke I have from modern dancers runs rather like this : "Well, if this isn't the answer, what is ? At least we have seen that the classical ballet is too insulated and we are trying to grapple reality. What is your suggestion ?"

The point, of course, is that they are not grappling humanity. They have merely done what the deflated hypochondriacs do—flitted from orthodox practitioners to psychiatric and dianetic experts.

PRE-PACKAGED RIGOURS

But the hypochondriac spirals all medical help into his ego, not into his reason. So with these dancers. They have given up the pre-packaged rigours of one dance form for the less-defined cul de sac of another. The result : different, but equally useless.

My answer then ?

Must I have one ? That I know nicotine is bad for you does not impel me to give you toffees to suck in its place ! And even the heartlessly revealing X-ray has no supply of curealls for what it reveals.

I cannot hand you a "New Ballet". But, perhaps, I can itemize what the "New Ballet" (terrible phrase) must have if it is to promote ballet to a parallel compatability and acceptance with the other arts.

THE FOUR

FOCUS : Ballet must focus not on the "wife who cries whilst her man's at sea" but upon the man at sea. Upon the real, strong man of action, and of idea rather than of ideal. The hero of the American strip cartoon is preferable to the effeminate gropers of our current dance. In focus must be the actual creators of an emotional situation, not the attendees of the wake.

PLOT : The day-to-day drama, idealized as need be, must become staple diet. If the theatre could have Ibsen, Strindberg, and their near-equivalents decades ago, it is long past time that the dance artist was given comparable material.

LIASON : A closer working between ballet and the other arts is necessary. That ballet will, initially, be the "poor brother" artistically (because of stunted growth) does not preclude a rapid pursuit and eventual balancing of artistic force.

HUMANITY : The creative guiding forces of ballet must be accessible to normal human passions, they must be affected by everyday drama, love, excitement and ideals—necessarily in a more personalized form as is the case with all artists—but still essentially normal in cause, effect and transference to artistic retelling. The stimulant to art should be a human craving, not the by-product of a perverted and insular society of likeminded limps.

The results ?

A human, invigorating and essentially understandable re- creation in dance terms of emotions and effects understood by the majority of the public.

MAJOR STATUS

Ballet failed to bound into the major art class because the people in ballet have minor intellects, governed by abnormal influences.

Ballet will reach its major status permanently when, as with all other art, it typifies and comments and has an adult bearing upon life.

A neuter may think himself right, but he will be in a minority of one. In life there is space for the hermit, but he gives up his possibility of affecting others. In the theatre "affecting others" is the basic requirement. This is no place for hermits, or for neuters.

The barren which is gnawing at the roots of ballet's public acceptance knows it will be impaled on that very acceptance. The existence of many people in ballet today is desperately threatened by the healthy onslaught of the new ballet. That is why the trend towards normality is attacked.

Ballet, no more than any patient, should submit to the diagnosis of incurably diseased doctors. Worry not that ballet is about to die. It won't. But those who scream of doom have seen the preparations for their own embalment. The funeral they mourn is their own.

Only the dead will go burying their dead. Frankly, I shall be celebrating with a healthy appreciation of imminent disposal given a helping hand.

I will not be a member of the funeral.

GLOOM FOR SALE

During my recent, short lecture tour, I was astounded to hear of the tales of gloom brought by my predecessors. Apparently the theme song of those who lecture on the dance today is misery—a blues without a turnabout.

I prefer the Irish or New Orleans misery. Blues while you tread to the cemetery, then a quick flush of instruments and breeze back into town with a stirring march. The Irish call it a wake, Jelly-Roll Morton called it a "diggin' in". Either way, the carcass is abattoired and the survivals go merrily on their way.

Old things for old men. Remnants for reactionaries. These elderly vampires who suck the life-blood of young ballet can be beaten by exactly the same means used upon poor Dracula : faith.

Faith in our art, in ourselves, in what we can achieve.

The weapon of the degenerates is that all young people ape their elders—it is a practical, normal way of maturing. Given blase, aberrated, precious and depressed "maturity" as the apparent norm in ballet, too many young dancers affect the same nonsense. As the teenager takes to cigars or cognac just to be "in the swim" and be taken for an adult, so our youngsters ape these silly old men with their hothouse etiquette of abnormality.

So speed the funeral. The young need better goal than this—and adult people do exist in ballet. I want to emphasise the "new" in new year . . . . . and the new includes a better goal for dancers : maturity.

BALLET TODAY for January

● *Managing Editor : I. E. Herf. Publishing and Advertising address : 15, Upper Brighton Road, Surbiton, Surrey (Elmbridge 9743). Annual Subscription 15/-*

Maryon Lane

Cafe des Sports

OMINOUSLY titled, Alfred Rodrigues' new ballet for Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet lived up to expectations. It should be recorded here, in advance, that Rodrigues gave us Blood Wedding —that first work so full of choreographic promise.

Deciding that its successor must be a comedy is admissible. Even that it be facetious. But why must English comic ballet be set in the pre-depression era? Do all of us live in the perpetual paranoia of the twenties?

Cafe des Sports concerns an Urchin's love for the Lame Dog who is losing a bicycle race. Urchin replaces Lame Dog and wins race, grand prix sash and L.D. as lover. Betwixt times come some bourgeoisie, a group of existentialists (i.e. girls in long wigs) and essentialists (not so long), a waiter (straight from Deuil en 24 Heures) and a cafe proprietor whom I thought would surely lead the ensemble in a rousing can-can finale.

She did not.

A ROMP

Apart from this single virtue, there is little more to say for this Cafe des Sports. For Maryon Lane it is an excellent, further opportunity to show her gamin presence and zestful technique. For the remainder of the company it is a romp.

Decor and costumes are simple but fitting, designed by Jack Taylor. Anthony Hopkins music is circa Ferde Groffe and George Gershwin and only needed Paul Whiteman and eighty-six grand pianos to complete its archaism. And the orchestra excelled itself by reading 'blues' as 'dirge' and having a trumpeter who confirmed my worst fears of what a pit bandsman can achieve.

The ballet as a whole is thin-lipped Petit spiced by rather gawky sex. I found it a major disappointment and spent the evening mourning for a man who choreographed a superb first ballet called *Blood Wedding*.

UPROARIOUS

The audience, and I say this as much in judgment as in truth, found the ballet uproarious and greeted the entrance of the cyclists with cheers and laughter no less than six times. It is upon such foundations as this that the English find their love of sport and the aliens find themselves with fixed furrows on their brows.

Ballet in Review

by

Peter Craig-Raymond

The Waterfall

BALLET WORKSHOP opened a new season at the Mercury-theatre, W., with a short ballet to Prokofiev—The Waterfall. Ronald Yerrell was choreographer, the decor and costumes were by Desmond Heeley, the latter made excellently by Scott Gray.

Audrey Nicholls as a teenage voluptuary (a princess according to the programme), dashed colour and vivacity on the tiny stage, dancing quite strongly. She is an extrovert dancer, wide-spanned and confident in attitude and arabesque and firm in pirouettes. Her attendants, Patricia Ashworth and Selma Siegertsz, framed her well (in sea-green, opposed to her pink-red tights costume). Norman Morrice danced her Suitor, and Yerrell himself danced the Water Spirit. His choreography for this, his own role, was less thorough than that for the others and his spirit was a trifle distaff.

OWN ENEMIES

The waterfall simulation was intelligently conceived and within the confines of such a theatre, well executed. The dressing of the ballet, especially for the Princess, was very good.

I could find, however, no choreographic use of the waterfall theme, nor was the music suggestive. It is the unfortunate mark of the experimenter or the newcomer that he piles on his own enemies, whereas the professional makes his attendants as helpful to himself as possible. If a Massine had done this ballet he would have used a certain Handel work, I am afraid!

I could not make much meaning out of this ballet—except for its eternal triangle basis with subterranean trimmings — but this is becoming an occupational disease of the ballet critic.

In many ways, though, The Waterfall was right for such a setting as Ballet Workshop, and Frolic, which preceded it, is a bright trifle which also fits bespokely. Quite a strong start to the season, in fact.

Ballet Workshop can be one of two things. A hermetically sealed vacuum, or a definite source of new talent and the extension of dance vocabulary and usage which will be the life-blood of our future ballet.

Bolshoi Dancers

IS this Russian technique vaudeville? And, if it is, must vaudeville be spelled out in lower case? Certainly even I find it acrobatic, but the point to be remembered is that the Cygne Noir grand pas de deux would be acrobatic if thrown on a platform stage without context or surround.

The technique displayed by Raissa Struchkova and Alexander Lapauri is thrilling stagecraft and has its place in ballet. It is not ballet, no more than any fragmentary glimpse of mere technical prowess is the sum of the art. But it is a basic requirement of the Russian approach to ballet. I disagree with its flagrant use, but I am thrilled to find dancers capable of performing so dynamically, and with less strain than most dancers hold an attitude.

BRILLIANT

And, after the sneers of the nondescripts, where is the admission that the supported pirouettes shown by Struchkova were undoubtably brilliant? If "acrobatics" produce the latterday miracle of a pirouette held without tremor, then I give my blessings to the acrobats.

The adagio from Casse-Noisette—although dressed abominably and choreographed less than well—was superb as a dancers' performance. The Mashkowski Waltz I have already written about.

TYPICAL

And again a mention for Lapauri. If it takes communism to produce men like this, then better for all our dancers to wave red flags. But I think it is the schooling and the student's own mind which makes the dieffrence, not the politics.

I wonder if any students admired Struchkova and Lapauri . . . or even attended the performances? Sometimes the typical London treatment of foreign talent reminds me of the Scottish clan of nonentity poets who, so afraid of competition were they, that they invented a tongue-foolery called "Lallans" which none but they can speak.

PERHAPS

Perhaps in England we are inventing an anaemic dance language which no others can use.

Or—as with Lallans—would ever want to use.

Arms and the Dancer

"Since all who take part in waltz or cotillon
Are mounted for hell on the devil's own pillion,
Who as every orthodox christian well knows
Approaches the heart through the door of the toes."

IN England the devil, having found us firm on our toes, approaches the ballet hell via the arms. This may refute Mr. J. R. Lowell who wrote the above verse in his 'Fable for Critics' but it is upheld by both corps de ballet and soloists today.

The devil was not, and is not the reincarnation of, Maestro Cecchetti. As a teacher, and maitre de ballet, Cecchetti was probably excellent. English ballet, snug in its sheepcote, and with the passive nod as shibboleth, has thwarted Cecchetti as a mere assist in its self-refrigeration.

PRIDE

The pride of our race is that we never eat peas with our knives, show emotion with our face, complement understanding with our arms or treat our bodies with any less rigidity than Victorian fathers treated their seen-not-heard offspring.

The archetype of our English dancer must have been a prim miss not quite sure that it was decent to be seen upon the stage. And, as always with mass-production from a prototype, the succeeding misses have walked equally gingerly upon the stage.

Luckily the legs, if they are to dance at all, must move. So the neurosis shifted to the arms. Stiff, sharp, tightly adhesive to their sockets, the arms move, not to represent thought or feeling or correspond with other action, but from position to position like shunting goods trains.

Is there a cure ?

MANNER

The diffidence of manner in general must first be partly overcome and with this gone, a belief that emotion is not to be hidden away but—in an artist—exploited, projected, must be realized.

Dancers have hearts. The line between here and arms should be a principal, easily tapped artery.

Pioneering in Canada

—and the first television ballet company

CANADA is not a country with which ballet has long been associated, but it seems that now they are trying to blaze a future disregarding the lack of tradition behind them. There is further welcoming news: they have advanced several steps beyond their European compatriots for they have succeeded in forming a company, which also has its own school and caters exclusively for the production of television ballets. The company is styled the Ballets Chiriaeff.

It is directed by Ludmilla Chiriaeff herself; a Russian dancer, who was born and trained in Berlin, she was a member of the de Basil company before the war; during the latter part of hostilities she moved to Switzerland, where she held the position of ballerina and choreographer at the Opera Houses in Geneva and Lausanne, during which period she mounted many well-known ballets.

EMIGRATED

At the end of the war, with her husband and family, she emigrated to Canada, where she opened a ballet school.

But in the beginning of 1953 the television department of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation commissioned her to choreograph several ballets for them.

So successful were these that they immediately contracted her to devise one ballet each month for them and she was also offered contracts by other programmes, thus having to produce at the rate of two or even three ballets every month!

Only, naturally, she had to increase her staff at the academy and also to enlarge her company.

Amongst the many ballets she has choreographed are *Le Cage d'Or*, *Jeux de Cartes*, *Primavera*, and *The Scarecrow*.

ERIC HYRST

One of the principal dancers of her company is Eric Hyrst, who was at one time with the Sadler's Wells Ballet and later with the International Ballet.

He went to America with the New York City Ballet, afterwards dancing in several shows on Broadway. He has also devised ballets for the Chiriaeff Company, including *Drawn Blinds* (which he choreographed in London for the Ambassadors Ballet), *La Valse Macabre*, and a version of *Romeo and Juliet*.

OTHERWISE

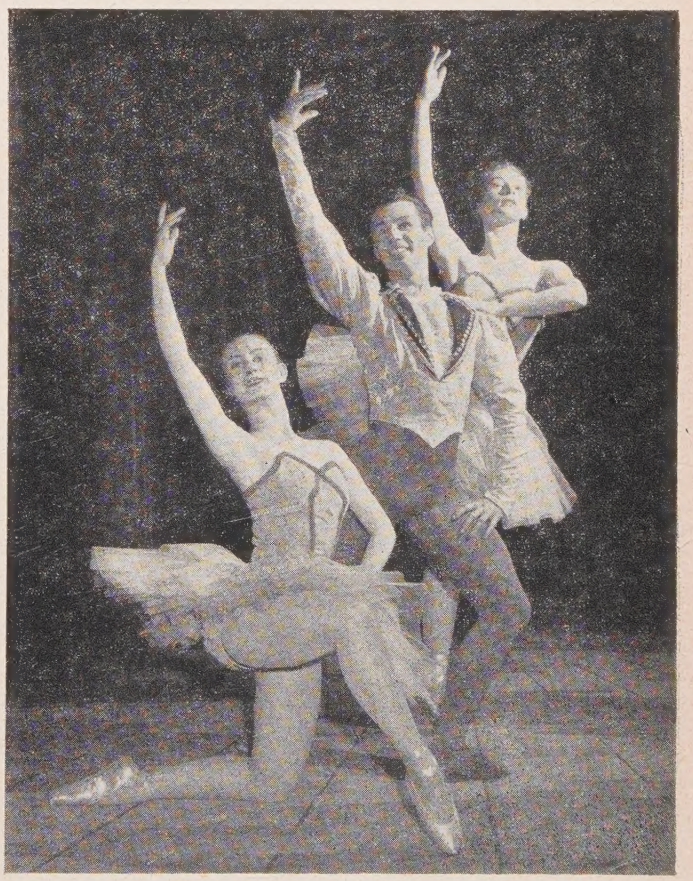
Apart from three other European dancers, the remainder of the Company is Canadian, namely Francois Sullivan, Andrey McCampbell and Christina McDonald.

This is a company and an undertaking which is certainly a milestone in ballet history. It is pioneering in a medium for which ballet is virtually unaccustomed, a medium which, at the moment finds opinion strongly varied as to whether it is suitable or not for the transmission of ballet.

Whatever you yourself may think, it is a step forward. And a step forward is a step in the right direction.

V. C.

Above: Eva Von Gency, the Hungarian Opera Ballet dancer who has recently joined the Chiriaeff Ballet. Below: Edith Landoli-Hoffman, Christine McDonald and Londoner Eric Hyrst in the Delibes Pas de Trois which is now in the repertoire of Chiriaeff company and was previously performed by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.



Paris

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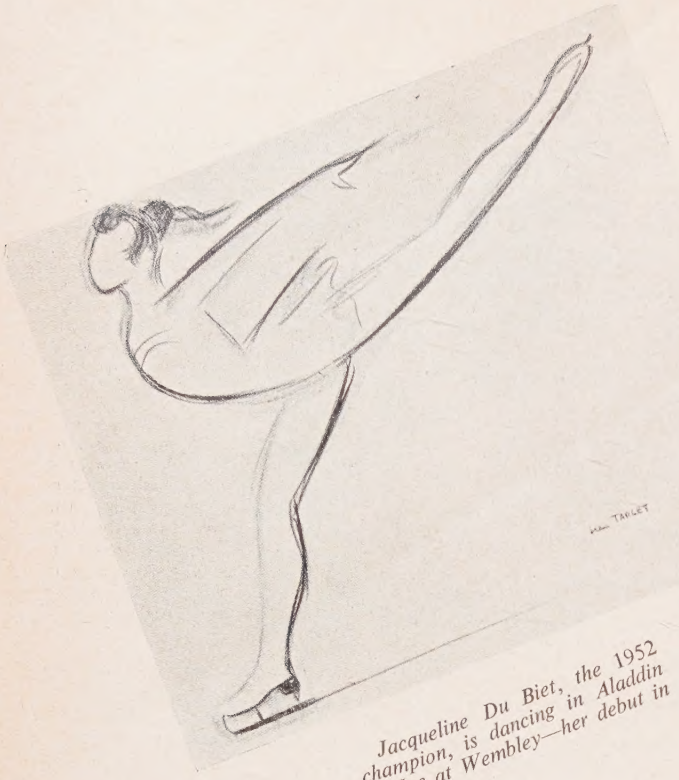


Jacqueline Du Biet, the 1952 champion, is dancing in Aladdin on Ice at Wembley—her debut in London.

Sketches by Jean Target

MANY Parisians were astounded, particularly those who are ballet-lovers, when the news was given that the Sadler's Wells Ballet had obtained their visa to go behind the Iron Curtain that lay in the very middle of Paris. Although the Frontier Guards were quite partial towards the "singers" who passed the doors of the Palais Garnier, they were not so "partial" towards the dancers who penetrated their walls.

At first the English troupe appeared to be received in a most charming manner, and the French ballet lovers queued with light hearts and every assurance—booking their seats a week in advance. Although the prices were equivalent to the London ones, the booking office was taken by storm. At the same time in London, our French National Ballet were giving performances and one hoped that this exchange of Ballets, would give a greater understanding to both countries.

Paris knows the Anglo-Russian style, and the Opera gave London the opportunity of knowing the Milan School, which is only practised here and which cannot be seen elsewhere, not even in Milan. And so we come to the first night. The hall was almost entirely filled with those who had been personally invited by the Management of the Opera.

Quite simply, the usual publicity given to well-known artists.

There was no undue noise in the hall. Those invited applauded a little less than politeness usually demands. Strangely enough the guests seemed to be all of one mind (a curious thing for Parisians). They did not like the Sadler's Wells Ballet, *Sleeping Beauty* or Margot Fonteyn. Even she, in perfect form, more beautiful and fresher than ever, did not seem to touch their hearts. In reality, could one say "touch" ?

We do not know.

The Opera Ballet with its Lifarian choreography and great technique ; does this constitute as strong an intoxication as Opium ? In perfect good faith, our "colleagues" confused personality with non-discipline by reproaching the corps de ballet for having, in effect, a collective personality, and of not being made of non-conciliatory individuality.

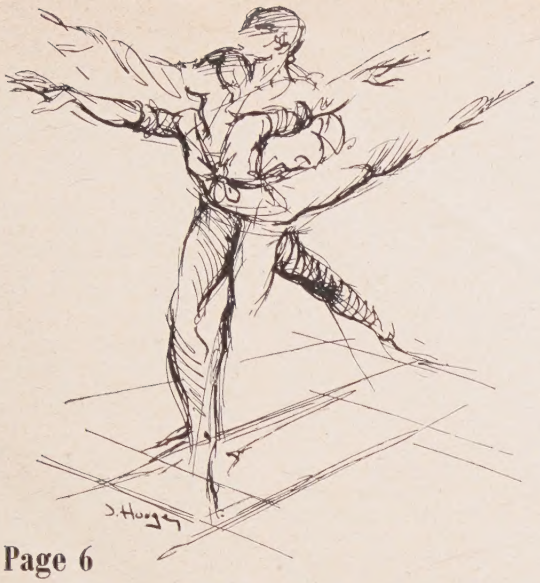
There were many bad criticisms, and all this is indeed astounding.

Unfortunately this is added to by other incidents such as a curtain that falls with little applause, from a public that are sincerely impressed by all the beauty, and who incidentally paid for their seats, the "snow" that fell on Michael Boulton's head in *Les Patineurs*, just as he was taking his final pirouette ; the technicians who did not cease talking whilst changing the scenery for *Tiresias* ; and the lighting-effects which were projected in the wrong direction. It is regrettable to think of the impression that Ninette de Valois and the Company must have of

Belinda Wright dances in the L'Oiseau Bleu pas de deux with the Marquis de Cuevas Ballet.

Sonia Arova is dancing in Prince Igor with the de Cuevas Ballet.

Genia Melikova in Concerto de Chopin with the de Cuevas Ballet.



From Page 6

us. Those artists who are well disciplined ! Not a very good one, I am afraid !

Perhaps they thought, maybe erroneously, that all this was purposely done.

What must one think of all this ? **Jean Coquelle**

What, indeed ? The reports of bribery, corruption, official ceaquery and other minor and major sins have come in by the manuscriptful from Paris. Almost preposterous allegations against officials in the Paris dance world have been made in sober seriousness by mature, competent men. What did happen ? Are all these mere afterthought excuses for a bad performance ? Or was the Paris ballet world—and the press—rigged in advance ? Foreseeing the possibility of both Canasta and Scrabble failing in interest as the nights draw in . . . I leave this whole mystery for you—the reader's—reflection. Editor.

Caryl Brahms writes on the French critics on page nine.

Ballet on t.v.

And other coming events

COMING additions to Ballet Today include Fleet-street's best known television critic who is to write each month on video ballet production. This subject has long been left to amateurs without television experience and it is our plan to give full space to this first television expert to write on the dance.

A second addition is Paul Gold, one of the better known modern music colomnists and jazz writers. He will, with "P.C." and Montague Calman, give Ballet Today the most comprehensive musical team of any dance magazine.

He will, each month, range over contemporary music with an eye on ballet and dance potential. His first article appears next month.

Supplements

During the year we are to publish several special supplements which will be of permenant reference value to balletgoers. These will all be lavishly illustrated.

The most famous theatre dance teacher in the United States is to start a regular column in Ballet Today within the next few months. This new feature is of the greatest interest and utility to all professional dancers and students.

Several interviews are in the offing, and a three-part biography of the most popular of all ballerinas has been commissioned.

Covers

Apart from these features, all regular material will be maintained and our strong lead in outstanding covers will, of course, be kept firm. Several fine cover photographs will adorn the coming issues.

Altogether 1955 will be another year of extra, added value in Ballet Today and it is our hope that you will find these issues of the very greatest interest.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN BALLET

THE need for drastic measures to give even a bare living to the professionally trained, competent dancer in Britain was highlighted by a rowdy meeting on theatrical unemployment staged by Equity during November.

As theatrical conditions in general are not actually effective for dancers, I shall leave to another time comment upon Equity's meeting.

What is needed here, now, for ballet dancers ?

The first great barrier to employment is the virtual closed-shop practised by the Sadler's Wells management. Under this system almost no dancer can join the companies who has not been trained at the Wells school.

DEFENSIBLE

This practice is a closed-shop, but it is defensible. Director Ninette de Valois knows exactly what type of dancer she wishes to enter her company. The surest way of ensuring trouble-free staff is to recruit from her own school. That she does and she is correct in doing so. I may attack the teaching ideology or technique, but I must admit that —to keep a company status quo—the best method is to school entrants oneself.

Festival Ballet, to a slightly lesser extent, use the Italia Conti school for corps recruiting. Ballet Rambert uses her west London school.

So we must face the fact that in Britain ballet is, to all practical point, a closed-shop.

The normal ballet dancer is unsuited for variety, café or musical work because she has been trained by shortsighted teachers. The teacher today who trains solely for classical ballet without warning child and parent of the need for broader working is a charlatan.

AMATEURS

The other major threat is the huge, growing amateur movement. While a single professionally competent young dancer remains unemployed, no amateur dancer should be allowed a stage in any circumstances. This applies to every Equity branch : no amateur performances of any kind should be allowed today.

The effective way to stop all amateurs is to blacklist any theatre or hall letting to an amateur organisation. Almost all dramatic works can also be refused amateur performance if Equity, the Dramatists' League, and other societies work together.

The amateurs usually excuse their activity by saying that they are training an audience for the real theatre. Sadly this is a lie. The amateur audience suffers from inverted professionalism and, in all too many cases becomes "too good" to bother with professional theatre.

I do not write of this from a London Office. I know the provincial theatre. I have seen the empty houses for a first-rate repertory while a thousand citizens queued outside for the following week's *Gilbert and Sullivan* or equal rubbish, performed by local amateurs.

WELCOME

I do not agree with regulations disallowing anyone from doing anything. And I could not support any legislation to ban amateurs. But I cannot see why we should give them house-room in our own theatres ! And until every dancer and actor is employed I cannot extend the welcome mat.

There is no point to speaking glowingly of ideal employment—fifty two week contracts, livable salaries and the rest. Ballet cannot support such demands in full (although we could come nearer to them).

But we can keep out the worms who live for free upon what artists have worked for years to achieve. The body cannot exist with the internal enemy. The theatre can no more exist with these amateurs.

POSSIBILITIES

Other possibilities include an exchange one-for-one arrangement with the countries of origin of visiting dance companies, thus guaranteeing employment for English ballet equal to that given here for oversea companies.

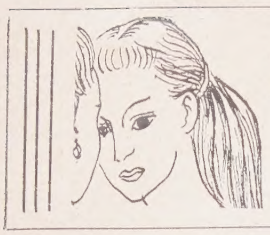
Sadler's Wells, apparently incapable of keeping either of its two companies on the road, should launch a third, small chamber ballet group to tour on a forty-eight week year basis throughout the provinces and without a London season.

Ballet Rambert should be given a subsidy to enable a similar tour but on condition that fifty per cent of the company is recruited at open audition.

The Wells School and Wells Ballets should be divorced, thus taking away the school's selling line of being an entrance to the companies more easy than that afforded otherwise. And the two Wells companies should be—if they are to continue to receive a public subsidy—forced to hold open auditions with the safeguard that fifty per cent of incoming corps should be non-Wells School trained.

LIMITATION

The principal problem today, as regards new talent, is that—almost invariably—it is only the dancer with moderately wealthy parents who can be fully trained. And there is, as yet, no providential determination which gives talent only to the rich.



Ballet as I see it

by FERNAU HALL

IN all the arts there are nuances of technique and style which mean a great deal to the professional, but tend to be missed by the layman. This is particularly true of classical dancing, for here there are countless possible nuances of movement in three dimensions of space and one very Einsteinian dimension of time (which is so to speak curved by the music).

It is therefore not surprising that two people watching the same performance may see two quite different things. This is true not only of the more subtle aspects of interpretation, but even of the most bread-and-butter aspects of technique such as the ability of a dancer to stay on balance in a pirouette.

The fact is that we see with our brain, not just with our eyes, and we cannot see anything if the brain has not developed a pattern into which the visual sensations can be fitted. We must *learn to see* : this process is so lengthy and difficult that persons born blind who are given the use of their eyes after becoming adult sometimes give up the attempt to see.

EVEN THEN

During their long years of training dancers learn to see dancing in a very detailed and accurate way, and that is why the comments of a dancer on the performance of another dancer are nearly always worth hearing, even when the former is deficient in taste and lacking in intelligence.

If the dancer on the stage sickles a foot, lifts a shoulder, or lets the knee drop below the raised foot in *attitude*, the dancer in the auditorium cannot fail to notice this—being made sensitive to such faults through hundreds of corrections to his own work in class.

Teachers, of course, see more than anyone else : the great teacher has a wonderful contrapuntal vision, noting simultaneously every nuance of line and timing in the movement of every part of the dancer's body, and appreciating the harmonious blending of the parts in the whole as well as each detail of each part. Dancers are out on their mettle when having a class from such a teacher, for they know that they cannot cover up any deficiency with tricks of bravura.

HEAD MOVEMENT

One aspect of dancing to which good teachers devote much attention is the use of the head. This is perhaps the most fiendishly difficult aspect of the whole classical technique.

Year by year the dancer learns to feel the line of arms and legs, forming a constantly changing picture of his appearance from out front by bringing together the messages which come to the brain from the muscles and joints; but the head presents a far more complex problem, since it can move in three different ways (turning, raising-lowering and inclining), and the muscles and joints involved are correspondingly intricate.

Another difficulty is that the head always moves with a rhythm different from that of the arms and legs : it may continue to rise, for example, when the body is falling, in order to give an illusion of soaring flight. But the greatest difficulty is psychological : if there is any self-consciousness, any lack of balance between intellect and feeling, this is displayed very clearly in the carriage of the head.

REASONABLY

Most dancers are happy if they can make their head movements reasonably correct and in harmony with their arm movements, so that the head does not draw attention to itself ; and there are some quite well-known dancers who cannot even achieve this. (Certain American ballerinas think nothing of going through a whole *enchainement* with heads stiffly erect).

On the other hand there are a small number of dancers whose artistry is so highly developed that they are able to dance in a positive way with their heads, using them to achieve nuances of expression impossible by any other means. In this respect—as in a great many others—Margot Fonteyn is in a class by herself among contemporary dancers : her head-movements are infinitely varied and flexible, responding to each change in the choreographic patterns and the mood, while the quality of movement changes enormously from one role to another. (Odile's head-movements, for example, are sharp, vicious and sensual, those of Odette are tender and plastic, and those of the Firebird flicker in a bird-like way.)

Beriosova's head-movements show none of this variety, but they are always graceful, spontaneous and perfectly in harmony with her *epaulement* and arm-movements.

Julia Farron never ceases to astonish by the intelligence and sureness of taste with which she adapts her head-movements to each part.

It is very rare for a male dancer to reach this standard of expressiveness in head-movements ; but Antony Tudor managed it in his own dancing in *Pillar of Fire*, and he succeeded in bringing Hugh Laing to a corresponding standard in *Undertow*. Johaar Mosaval is still immature, but his head movements already show astonishing artistry.

IGOR A LA FRANCAISE

I was intrigued by the Paris Opera's production of the Polovstian Dances, for it brought out certain aspects of this company more clearly than any of its own creations. The danceuses of the corps de ballet clearly enjoyed themselves, giving a brave show of eyes and teeth and making it quite clear (both in their movements and their make-up) that they considered the Polovstian steppex a turning off the Champs-Elysees.

Fokine was accustomed to express himself with considerable pungency in rehearsal even when he was working with the fine artists of the Diaghilev Ballet in its Golden Age : it is hard to imagine *what* he would have said of these performances, which represented the exact opposite of everything he fought for.

One danceuse quite fascinated me, for I had never seen anything quite like it. Her face was apparently innocent of make-up, and her technique was clearly very limited ; but she worked with tremendous energy, giving the impression of an aging and harassed schoolmistress trying to cope with a crowd of unruly children.

I later discovered that she presents herself each year to the Opera examinations, providing some welcome light relief ; by passing these examinations she goes up a grade and qualifies for the role belonging to the next grade.

This sort of tradition is preserved very well by the Opera : it is a pity that more important Operatic traditions (such as the old French school of dancing) have not beee preserved.

EAST AND WEST — BUT NOTHING NEW MUSICALLY

A MUSICIAN LOOKS AT BALLET
by
MONTAGUE CALMAN

IF nothing else, recent ballets in London have taken us away from perpetual plugging of watered down Tschaikovsky and hotted up Debussy. But little was of great inventiveness.

We know enough of Japanese culture not to expect anything of true originality from it. In its music, despite its early origins, there has been little of value though the Japs have claimed with typical conceit that they have influenced Debussy and Stravinsky. In the early days of Japanese music, up to about 450 A.D. the main music was accompaniment for the dance provided by pipes and drums, and the percussive effect persists right through to this day.

Around 1700 a 3-stringed banjo, the samisen, was developed and Miho Hanayagui and her Company of Japanese dancers (Princes Theatre recently) brought two of them with her. Her other musical forces were a zither-like instrument (a variant of the Chinese harp), some portamento singing of pentatonic and whole tone, drums and other percussive instruments.

BACKGROUND

Believing as they do that music should not betray any emotion the Japanese use their sounds to create a background for the dance rather than we of the West who hope to marry sound into the dance in forming an integral part of ballet. Unfortunately those responsible for the London presentation of this Japanese Ballet did not do the Company justice. Horrid microphones leading into distorting loudspeakers gave garish sounds off into the theatre when the gentle sway of oriental music was called for.

To the musician, Japanese music could mean any sound for they believe that a musical chord consists of a number of notes all harmonising with the key note though not necessarily harmonising with each other. But the unmusical need not have worried for all we heard was a range from a deeply resonant harp-like quality, to a chirping zither tone, intermingled from time to time by cattle trucks being shunted into goods yards.

—*To Page Twenty*

Caryl Brahms
"Speaking Personally"

WATERLOO 1954

THEIR style is not our style" observed the French critic Oliver Merlin of the visit of the Sadler's Wells Ballet to the Paris Opera, writing in *Le Monde*. And in six words M. Merlin has summed up not only what his colleagues felt about "le Ballet Britannique" but also what we felt of the ballet from the Paris Opera. And this sharp difference in approach is borne out in almost every one of the thirty-two notices and feature articles which form the file of the Sadler's Wells season in Paris '54, and which have been largely my reading matter for an entire weekend.

The general verdict was that, with the exception of Fonteyn, Elvin and Beriosova, the dancer of the British Ballet has an amazing—but mechanical—discipline to which many more desirable qualities have been sacrificed, so that the Wells corps de ballet is cold and soul-less. As for our men, they made one critic sigh for the rapid return of their own Andreani.

Another critic starts his notice by assuring his readers that the London audiences would hardly have the nerve to be dissatisfied with what they were offering us in the face of our own low standards in ballet !

Francois Guillard de Rode complained in *Le Figaro Litteraire* that they had been wrong in imagining that the ballet from Covent Garden was at the height of its achievement wherein it was plain to see that here was a company in decline.

FORESEEN

How different all this—and much, much more to the same tune—is from the rave notices the company collected in America—what a fantastically different point of view !

Yet the French reaction to the Covent Garden Ballet was foreseen by Arnold Haskell in the November issue of *La Danse*, where for once he has allowed himself a note of pessimism :

"I hope that this exchange will help our two countries to understand each other better, but I doubt it."

Edward Linval, writing in the same issue speaks of the shattering check to a host's wishes to praise his guests however insipid the fruits of their offering.

Almost without exception the French critics were bored by the *Sleeping Princess* and astonished that English audiences tolerated it.

Merlin, most enlightened and correct of critics, noted that it was given a sympathetic reception on the first night of the season, though quite without any excess of enthusiasm. But "how anaemic are the decors !" he exclaims. Claude Baigneres (*Figaro*) goes farther—some will think a lot too far—when he writes of "The blinding ugliness of the sets and costumes".

WORMWOOD

This criticism, I admit, made me blink. But it has to be ceded that the twelve year old Mis-en-scene is not the first flight of Messel's inspiration.

Had he been commissioned to re-design it (instead of refurbishing the existing conception) we might have been able to boast a masterpiece of elegance, as his recent work for Glyndebourne and for the plays of Christopher Fry indicate, and as is the case with his empyrean *Homage to the Queen*, another ballet, incidentally, that was wormwood to the French.

And of course it was not only the decors to the *Sleeping Princess* that were so poorly rated. The costumes, for instance, of *Les Patineurs*, according to *L'Information* "sont affreux". More than one paper called this gay bit of Victorian skating nonsense "a dusty work". Many of the critics marvelled that the company from Covent Garden could be so little influenced by Parisian stage design.

Only Angot was generally approved, and here Nerina reaped the benefit of her neat technique and all-round docility.

Tiresias was slated as much for its tasteless colours as for its choreographic content. Nor was its music greatly admired.

APPROVED

Unanimous were those critics who saw Elvin's *Sleeping Princess* and her *Lac des Cygnes*. Here was dancing that the French thoroughly approved—clearly articulated, supple, feminine and deliberate "her supremacy is vibrant to reveal itself".

Beriosova, too, as the *Lilac Fairy* was universally and unreservedly praised. Here, in the opinion of the French critics, is our future Fonteyn. But in this they count without the policy of the Direction.

Of Fonteyn herself they admit they were dazzled (save for the writer who declared that she comes far behind Hightower), though they found her a little too aloof—even mechanical—for their taste.

They cared no more for the choreography of Ashton than we on our side care for the choreography of Lifar. They found, Tchaikowski apart, our choice of music verging on the abysmal—most of them deplored Robert Irving's reading of *Daphnis and Chloe* (a ballet they could not bear, castigating choreography and decors too). "The English accent does not agree with Ravel.'

ADMITTED

Lac des Cygnes, however, really did impress them. They were forced to admit that in Fonteyn and Elvin we had two exponents of the Swan-Princess conception that would be hard to better. And Alexander Grant, both in the Tarantella Ashton has here devised for him and that quiet but excellent and stylish dancer, Farron, and again in Angot, earned a personal success.

On and on one could go, detailing these fascinating criticisms—criticisms that clearly range from fairminded appreciation and fault-finding to bigoted, blind, disregard—from a genuine regard to chauvinistic prejudice, as is the way of criticism on these occasions.

But the most disturbing thing about *File Waterloo* 1954 is not that Paris takes so poor a view of Covent Garden. We ourselves were stupified that the French ballet could go on trotting out their bogeys by Lifar—astonished that this excellent band of dancers seemed deaf to the death-rattle of a long-outmoded determination to be "moderne" at all costs.

It is open to question which represents the more sobering sight—our own ballet, young in years, making its blatant errors of taste and suffering its artistic setbacks, or that of the national ballet of France, with its long and continuous tradition, delivered up to a thoroughly tiresome choreographer ?

No, it is not the reproaches levelled at us by the French critics that have distressed me—some of them are jolly well deserved.

SINISTER

It is the sinister fact that their adverse notices were not printed in the national press. When the Wells wows New York the world knows it. When it meets its Waterloo the public are not told.

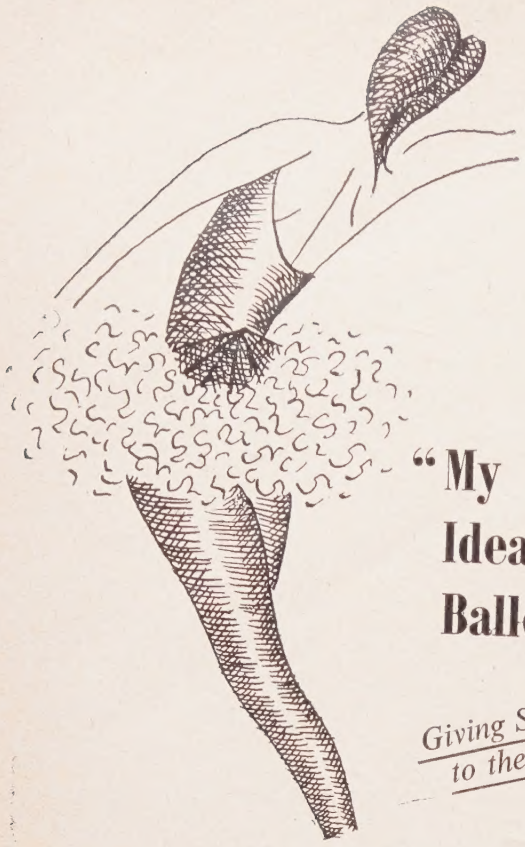
To what a misguided, miserable, insecure policy does that silence point.

Our recent production of *Firebird* has proved that it is a fine thing to open the doors of our national ballet to the gifted stranger.

And, that being done, what we must all of us pray for is an instructed and fearless press.

I would return to the subject of the ballet critics in this country next month since our Editor, of his wisdom, has let me off My Ideal Ballerina, were not good colleaguemanship raising its infinitely weary eyebrows.

Margot Fonteyn looks at a portrait of herself displayed in the British Institute, Milan, during the Italian tour of the Sadler's Wells Ballet.



"My Ideal Ballerina"

Giving Shape to the Vision

1: "I Can See Glimmers"

HAVING commissioned other writers in this and coming issues to expand themselves on their individual ideal ballerina, I have relegated to myself enough space to classify an ideal corps de Ballet junior.

What is my ideal ? I cannot say 'who' because, as yet, she has no more emerged from the inside of my eyelids than have I dulled the outside with rose-hued glasses.

Unlike Mr. Austin's ideal, but in accordance with the venerable French critic who smote his heart three times, my ideal ballerina would lack the boyish figure entirely. In a woman I demand contour, and being a dancer does not deflect from the specification. True, whenever—and this rarely—I find a young dancer with a woman's body, her teacher takes me into the corner and tearfully admits that she is too heavy. Caxton, putting up the business placards for the first time, and handed an encyclopaedia to set would have said much the same thing.

Which would have proved Caxton's lack ; not the needlessness of encyclopeadias.

Rather than expect her to emulate a frieze I think of her as a kind of Cineramic Rubens—a thousand movements in one, filling the eye so thoroughly that the backgrounds fades. Rembrandt, either bored or simply agin backgrounds, used the spotlight technique to save himself the bother of drawing them in. My ballerina—and I speak as a writer domiciled in England—could equally out-focus her attendants.

Her body would be schizophrenic in that it could intake the basics of classical technique without losing its natural beauty through contact with the drab routine of English ballet teaching. And her mind would be above the petty adequacy of today's ballet as her arms would shun the pseudo-Cecchetti of contemporary textbook—teachers.

She would have more knowledge of the world than has a Wodehouse virgin, and her interest in music would be positive, not polite. She would be far from aquiescent, so sure of her talent that no fear for physical security could numb her tongue.

She would, in fact, have the interests of Ballet as an art second only to her interest in herself as an artist.

As a dancer she would be eager for the new, the experimental, the untried role. Far from emulating the Hollywood starlet, she would not yearn after type-casting, her greatest role would be the next one, her favourite choreographer the one who demanded the impossible, her closest teacher the one who told her to do better.

She would not be the tired, lazy, self contended freak that decades of afternoon tea ballet have produced in England. She would possess not only spirit, but an acceleration confidence which would hurl her over the obstacles placed in her path by those who have competency as god. Her ideal would be the tomorrow, not of manana, but of ideal itself.

Above all my ideal ballerina will be a mature, theatrical artist. Not, not, not an anaemic, nice lady. But a fully temperamental (no, children, I do not mean she lays flat on stage and kicks her toes), fully grown, fully great artist.

A woman in ballet to match a Schwartzkopf or Lignani . . . a Thorndike or Ashcroft . . a woman whose impact is astounding, instantaneous. A woman who can walk onto a bustling stage and take the audience's eye from the rainbow.

Perhaps, like the rainbow, such women will come only after the rain. For the moment the prospect remains wet. But, when I dare open my eyes and lose my visions, I *can* see certain glimmers . . . . .

Peter Craig-Raymond

2: "The Quality of Inevitability"

EVERY critic has before him his vision of the ideal ballerina, against whom he measures each performance by contemporary dancers. She is not an imaginary creation, but one that has evolved slowly in his mind after watching many great ballerinas ; he has appropriated this or that feature of their dancing which satisfied him, and out of these memories he has formed his ideal which reconciles them all into one exquisite harmony.

The ideal ballerina has certain definite physical attributes. She may not be a great beauty, but her face must be interesting, intelligent and expressive ; the features must be regular and well-marked so that they do not blur under the footlights or from a distance. She will have a small head, proudly carried without strain or arrogance. She will have large expressive eyes. Her shoulders must not be too square nor yet too sloping. She must have small, well-rounded breasts ; her arms will be long and without knobbly elbows, her legs straight with well-formed calves and without protruding knees. Her ankles will be narrow and her feet arched. She must not be over five foot six inches tall, and for preference should be a brunette.

As a dancer the first quality my ideal ballerina possesses is sincerity. She will despise stunts, tricks and ugly virtuosity ; she will never draw attention to her own cleverness by holding an *arabesque* or a pose *en attitude* longer than the music demands. For she has real humility towards the music and the choreography which it illuminates, so that she does not impose herself upon them but allows them to possess her ; and by this her dancing is transfigured. It is natural in the fullest sense, in that it grows and flowers naturally from the elements of music and choreography

Her dancing has the absolute simplicity of great art, and to watch the curve of an upraised arm is to learn something about many arts beside her own. Each step is shaped, fully rounded and given its correct emphasis ; each contains within it the movement that has passed and that which is to come into being ; each step merges imperceptibly into the next, as one wave follows another.

Her dancing is completely harmonious, the flow of movement never impeded, and the musical phrases marked but not exaggerated by excessive *rubato*. If one could see her dance in one continuous picture it would have the quality of a Grecian frieze. It would form one harmonious whole in which each individual movement contributed to the next, and none attracted greater attention than any other.

She hides difficulties instead of stressing them, nor does she slur over uninteresting passages in her *variation* in order to give particular emphasis to its spectacular moments. She uses her technique, whether outstanding or adequate, as a means of emotional expression and never as an end in itself.

A *variation* by my ideal ballerina is like a string of pearls, exactly graded. She dances always within her powers, so that we are never conscious of strain or effort. A staccato or forced dancer is like a man with a stammer, or like a gramophone record upon which the needle keeps slipping ; but she will have no use for this fake classicism however much it may be applauded.

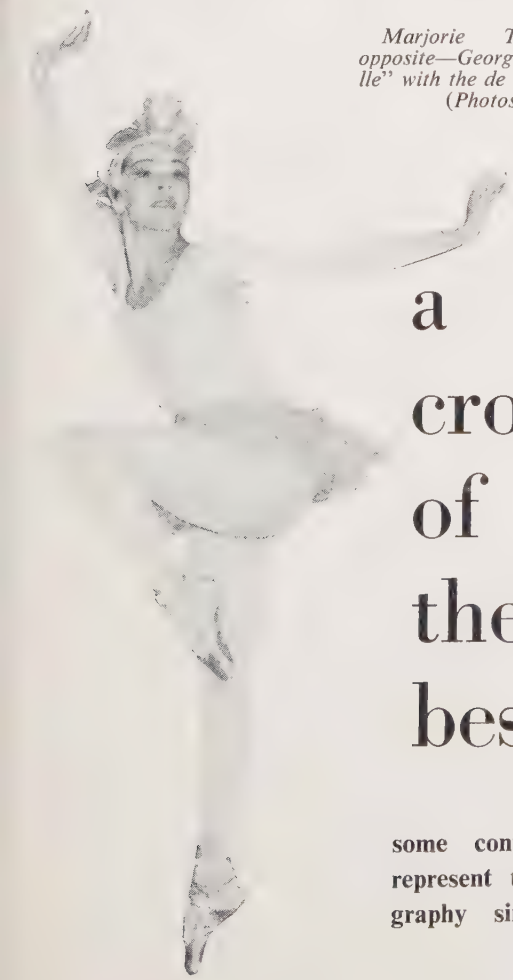
She ends her *variation* with an exact, precise flourish ; not in a spectacular whirl, with arms outstretched and the audience embraced in a toothy grin. It has the quality of inevitability. Her dancing can have all the opulence and splendour appro-

To page seventeen

a cross-section of the best

some contemporary ballets chosen to represent the best in European choreography since the war

by Jay Norman



Marjorie Tallchief and—opposite—George Skibine in "Idylle" with the de Cuevas Ballet. (Photos : Kamalakar).

AT a time when a larger number of ballets are being produced than ever before it is perhaps inevitable that the majority of them should be pot-boilers, gigantic failures, derivative or merely competent. The surprising thing is that so many are much more than this. The works discussed below are not necessarily the most famous of each choreographer mentioned, for in some cases those which have been less noticed but which are, I think, worthy of more attention, have been chosen. They have all been presented in London since 1946. No ballets by American choreographers have been included because their frequently different approach and lack of feeling for European classicism demands separate consideration.

Ashton's *Scenes de Ballet* with music by Stravinsky and decor by André Beaurepaire was first presented by the Sadler's Wells Ballet in 1948. Ashton appears to have absorbed the styles of Balanchine and Petit and fused them with his own brand of neo-classicism to create a ballet of interweaving patterns, without theme or plot, to an exciting Strawinski score—a mixture of jerky rhythms and sentimental tunes. The total effect is one of unexpected sublimity. Unfortunately the ballet has rarely been adequately cast, and it is fatal to downcast an abstract work of this kind which needs a prima ballerina, in the old sense, in the leading role.

WALTER GORE

It has been difficult to assess the true value of Walter Gore's *Winter Night*, a symphonic work based on the theme of the meeting and parting of lovers, which he created for Ballet Rambert in 1950, because of the intensely emotional nature of the score—Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto—and many people's violent reaction against it. Even so, it seems clear that the ballet is a remarkable work for a comparatively young choreographer who has not, before or since, shown any aptitude for being serious without becoming morbid or sadistic, nor betrayed any particular ability to compose symphonically, though he has always treated his chosen music with sympathy and insight. In this case he has used his dancers almost as musical instruments to express an emotional and dramatic theme.

L'Amour de Jupiter, a Kochno-Petit ballet based on scenes from Ovid, was one of the mean of introducing Jean Babilée to London in 1946.

This work, in which the amorous adventures of Jupiter in various disguises are told in separate scenes, linked by appearances of his companion Mercury (Babilée), shows very clearly how much Petit owes to Lifar. The strictly classical basis of the choreography, directly related to the 'classical' subject, is, however, overlaid with Petit's special wit and contemporary joie-de-vivre. The most successful scene is probably that in which Danae is seduced by Jupiter in the form of a shower of gold. Jean Hugo's simple set and chic but appropriate costumes well set off the stylised movements of the dancers.

JEAN BABILEE

Babilée's first essay in choreography, for the London season of *Les Ballets des Champs Elysees* in 1949, was *L'amour et son Amour* with decor and costumes by Cocteau and music by Caesar Franck (Psyche), danced by himself as Eros and Phillipart as Psyche.

In this tiny work he showed a truly poetical feeling for the relation of music to dance imagery and the whole of the flowing, weaving, undulating action of the ballet, in which music, movement and decor seem as one, pass before one's enchanted eyes as scenes from a dream. Babilee's virility and indolent grace have rarely been seen to better advantage. Cocteau's decors of earth and space make the perfect setting.

George Skibine's *Idylle*, presented in London by the Grand Ballet de Marquis de Quevas in 1954, seems likely to become the generally acclaimed small scale masterpiece of the year.

This simple story of 'He', 'She' and 'The Other', that turns out to be the eternal triangle in equestrian circles, not only gives Marjorie Tallchief the chance to show just how expressive and capable a dancer she has become, but also demonstrates the possibilities of the classical dance used directly to express a theme and tell a simple story. Very suitable music is provided by Francois Serette and delightful and suggestive costumes by Alwyne Camble.

In the same season John Taras was represented by a highly dramatic ballet *Piege de Lumiere* to an exciting score by Damase and with striking sets by Labisse. This ballet, based on the story of a group of escaped convicts making a living in the forest by the capture and sale of rare butterflies, has many weaknesses. It is too long and much of the choreography is repetitive, but it is a dramatic whole, building up to true balletic climaxes.

Two scenes, the pinnacle of butterflies impinged on the lamp and the moving and beautiful cortege of dead insects carried across the stage by their captors in frozen balletic poses, will long live in one's memory. Rarely had the purely pictorial beauty of the classical positions been used so ingeniously or with such dramatic effect.

JANINE CHARAT

The Charat-Castelli *Les Algues*, created for Charat's own company and seen in London in 1954, is perhaps most remarkable because it came at a time when one was beginning to feel that perhaps the ability to fuse dance and mime to express a theme of topical interest had been lost and it is refreshing, in spite of the gloom of its subject, to see a ballet in which nothing, in the balletic sense, jars or is out of keeping with the mood. The score by Guy Bernard is supplemented by voices and noises off.

The theme of a young man who follows his love into a madhouse in order to be near her, and eventually has to return to the world without her, is a most unlikely one for a ballet, but Charat seems to draw the spectator into this strange world (with her), so that as one watches the ceaseless and pathetic movements of the inmates, one only feels pity, terror and a sense of tragedy.

NOT FOR SERIOUS READING BUT THE TALE OF A REALLY MAD GISELLE AND

"I Am A Real Ballet

I AM writing the full story down before the psychologists and psychoanalysts and physico-therapists, with all their attendant ghouls, get hold of me ; perhaps it will help, perhaps it won't. Unfortunately I had an uncle who saw tigers, and an aunt who saw land-crabs, so with my word against a hundred others, I haven't very much of a chance . . . nevertheless.

The idea was crazy from the very beginning an open-air *Giselle* with a cast of twelve ; definitely crazy, but thank heavens it wasn't my idea. This, however, goes back to a potted *Swan Lake*, with a cast of six, which unfortunately was my doing. True ballet lovers will read this with incredulous horror but—it happened.

At our local school of ballet we have only about twenty pupils over the age of reason—or sixteen, and only one of them is really good ; I call her Helen, and other things in private, so you may as well know her as "Helen".

She has an astonishingly precocious technique for seventeen, and is very pretty and quite intelligent. Also we have access to Serge, an ex-premier danseur to various odd cosmopolitan companies, who settled down with a wife and farm nearby.

At forty six he can still manage a "double tour en l'air" without collapsing in a heap and calling for a lengthy coffee-break, which places him well ahead of our senior male students. He was always very delighted to appear in our end-of-term performances ; we were less so, but thought that half a danseur was better than no ballet.

CAME the end of the summer term last year, and I, as the senior student, was given the invaluable Mr. Beaumont and a new LP of *Swan Lake*, and told to "arrange something for the hospital garden party—I am going for a month's holiday". Thus Madame Tatiana, the school principal. By a series of cunning lies ("I will get a critic down from . . . I will not get a critic down from . . . I will be personally responsible for all expenses) I cooked up the following :— Prologue, to the Lakeside Scene prelude, showing Rothbart (self) turning Helen from a princess into a swan (hasty black-out, thunder and lightning, record of storm-and-seagulls while Helen rips off her robe and appears in tutu). Act Two, mime and pas de deux, ending with self arriving by air (courtesy of last year's Peter Pan) and removing Helen. The *Black Swan* took place in an annexe to the ball-room with glimpses of guests (two) through the archway, hard at *the* waltz, while Mamma, Serge, Helen and I mimed our heads off up-stage. Act Four mime and pas de deux ended with self being strangled on full stage by the Prince—Serge's idea.

Eighty-one children, everyone a polio sufferer, cheered us for ten minutes without a pause, and eighty-one children begged the entire cast for autographs ; Helen and Serge dissolved into tears and I had to go back stage to see to the properties. Our Principal, Madame Tatiana (Maureen O'Harridan from Doneghal) kissed me in public and eulogised me in broken English ; she later cursed me in fluent Irish for using the "1812" for a mime scene, among other abominations, but ended with "oh that sweet, chubby little boy of six" and cried on my shoulder . . . .

Somehow her next holidays coincided with the last concert, three days ago, at which the local girls' school were supposed to perform country dancing (one and a half hours) and excerpts from *The Faithful Shepherd* (about six and a half); I don't know whether the epidemic of scarlet fever was genuine, or whether the nurses did doctor the free milk, but I found myself with three weeks to "put on something even better than last time". I phoned Tatiana-Maureen, who had this time retreated to Doneghal, (charges reversed) and inquired what-the-devil ; she said that somewhere at the bottom of the props cupboard was Mr. Beaumont and *two* P'Ls of Giselle, and "if you use "Finlandia" for a happy ending you'll get a letter bomb by registered banshee".

THAT evening I called a council of war in the small hospital theatre, with the doors locked There was Helen, Serge, the other two male students (three over sixteen and the rest Dalcroze) and seven of Helen's best friends (I am dubious of her use of that superlative). "We are", I said, clutching at the table for support, "to put on a version of *Giselle* in just over three weeks." Everyone laughed. Then Helen came up to me and looked into my eyes, and then ran to the door She kicked at it hard and turned a defiant face towards me—"No" she stated, "I will definitely not—"

"Strategy" I said to myself "what would Don Juan do now . . . perhaps not." And aloud, "Oh, all right, then Daphne—" "I think" said Helen, sitting herself against me, "that my Swanhilda costume can be adapted." Serge sighed gently behind me. "I have a feeling most 'orrible that more than that will be adapted. Somewhere I have splendid Polovtsi costume ; the Vilis could—" My kick nearly cost us our Albrecht. "Act Two" I went on "will be by the ornamental lake." "Peter" interrupted Serge (my name by the way) "that gives me an idea most magnificent for the 'Ilarion death . . ." "Let us go out into the grounds" I said.

We found two cottages on a raised and level patch which would do beautifully for act one, when we turfed the gardening tools from the larger.

"Do the children know about the other one" I inquired of a nurse. She assured me they didn't.

"In the 'ospital modern" screamed Serge "the closette of earth . . . never 'ave I 'eard of such things."

ACT Two was arranged to follow a long interval for supper, when we calculated that the evening would have fallen ; the lights had to be provided by ambulance headlights. "If" said Sister Elisabeth, the hospital electrician "you must do the damn thing by the damn lake, you shall damn well suffer." We learnt that she was very proud of her new cyclorama.

Trouble began—Serge's version of *Giselle* was a good bit different from any other known to either England or Mr. B. Apparently Albrecht had a variation on his entrance consisting largely of two grande pirouettes, which by a peculiar chance were Serge's speciality (operative word "were") I suggested that he should substitute this for the act two variation which was received with much 'orreur and a barely audible smile of relief. To this he was persuaded without much difficulty.

"If", said Helen, "I don't break my ankle in a rabbit warren on my first jete, I shall certainly be hopelessly bogged down on my third". I adjured her to remember Sokolova, teaching on the day her child was born ; this for some reason started a riot which was only abated by Serge's announcement that "I wish to introduce a little variation and scene, just after the dea Giselle" A sort of Albrecht's Mad Scene in He had always thought that it would be a magnificent coup de theatre, but had never ha chance to try it before ; the outraged G turned upon him.

At last the day and the hour came, and tunately fine, although I had prayed for rain all my might. Eighty one children sat in com silence while the Prelude was played ; beh cottage Sister Elisabeth, Helen and Serg grabbed some part of me. "We've got to be g they all whispered fiercely.

SERGE and Wilfred went on in an entrap murmuring ; one small girl did ask "Is tha man who sat down in *Swan Lake*", but quickly hushed. I did my little bit and vani "Oo, isn't he wicked" said a small voice. H had a burst of applause when she first appe "Give me your damn handkerchief" she mutt to Serge.

"Is this damn switch the right headlamp, windscreen wiper or the horn" muttered Si Elisabeth, smashing her elbow into my kidn

Even the pas de deux (Wilfred and Gis eldest sister-neat ?) got a round of appl and as for the Mad Scene ! Helen had see old silent of La Bernhardt in *Dame aux Cam* and simply emphasised a few things she tho Sarah had missed, tossing in a few fouette good measure ; I ground my teeth and mutt threats. Serge began to throttle Hilarion, b drew back my right fist and he flung him hysterically upon Helen's body.

At long last we got rid of the children and aching tableau dissolved ; I strode over to H but my flood of righteous anger was cut sh

"Peter" she said softly, "my ankle". T was a rush around her, but Sister Elisabeth fl all aside.

"Out of the way" hauling me off by the "mmm . . . just a twist—carry her off, you That to Serge. "What the hell next ?"

I turned to Daphne. "Can you possi manage it ? You've been a sort of understu and with a bit of imagination" Daphne fled turned to Sister E. "I'll try to talk her into it" when I turned back again all the cast had go

Sadly I wandered down towards the lake and to my astonishment saw Daphne stand there. "Oh, you angel" I cried, but it was Daphne . . . Coming closer I noticed that was a little thinner, that her hair was darker straighter—but the likeness was unbelieveable

"Who—who are you ?" I gasped.

"Your Giselle" she replied with a smile, " you after supper", and vanished into the tr I rubbed my eyes and gaped after her ; then rush back to the supper.

"I will produce her mysteriously" I thou "a dea ex machina. Of course nobody belie me ; Sister Elisabeth placed her nose two inc from mine and sniffed. "Doesn't smell of drin repeat after me—"

Gently Daphne drew me aside.

"I'll do my best, Peter" she whispered. "Co on down to the set and we'll go into the det again." I allowed myself to be led. "It'll be right" she said soothingly "don't be worried

By **DAVID BARTON**

ES GYGNE(ICY)

ane"

elf taking a great liking to Daphne.
for us was the girl—fortunately. I
lurish as if about to produce a string of
om a hat. "That is our Giselle".

e girl came right up to us, and I saw a
liar and rather frightening look come
eyes. "Peter" cried Daphne, and
y arm. The girl stood only a couple of
and looked straight into her eyes ;
tered a little moan and her legs slowly
er her ; she slid in a heap to the ground.
girl's face became quite normal again
miled at me as I stood there, paralysed.
right" she said "just a deep sort of a
will only be out for about an hour—till
act is over. You'd better hide her
ewhere."
as if this was a nightmare, bending
ake her up in my arms ; she felt solid
My right arm around her waist ; my
nder her legs and her head, lolling down
ine—solid enough. I laid her down
me bushes, and then a ghastly thought
. "Supposing this girl was . . . no, she
e. And was Daphne—" I grabbed
-a good steady pulse. I wiped the sweat
n my face and came out of the bushes to
thers arriving . . .

rl was not a very good Giselle—this
t I haven't made it all up, for if I had she
obably be Taglioni herself, come back
e situation. She slipped once or twice,
arabesque was slip-shod ; Serge of course
the flowers—but it was very much
n nothing.
hudderingly submerged myself in the icy
the lake there were cheers and applause ;
rief underwater swim to a place where I
shelter from sight as I emerged, and
find Daphne—the spot was empty !
hat my mind is a bit of a blank ; I
r staring at the place for what seemed
s and then wandering backwards and
wondering what on earth or out of it
pened. Finally I did the leopard crawl
the stage—the performance was over
ncer, unmistakably Daphne, was taking
call.
Peter" she said, and burst into tears.
ssed her, Serge kissed her, Sister Elisabeth
er ; not to be outdone I kissed her and
d fiercely "Where's that girl ?" She
me blankly. "The one who was going
Giselle—the one whom you saw before
ed ?"
't get you, Peter—I must have come over
cause of nerves, but I don't remember
r Giselle"
. . . danced . . . all the Second Act" I
. . .
urse" she gazed at me in mingled pity and
r a second, and the audience called her . . .

YONE looks at me peculiarly nowadays ;
others me, Serge treats me as if I was
g ; Sister Elisabeth asks me about my
nother, uncles, aunts and all my other
to the ninth degree—but not a word of
horribly significant.
sychic Research young man will be down
rnoon ; I just had to send for him, but
ning to fear that it is the very last thing I
ave done . . . ah, well.

The Piquant Ballerina

—Patricia Miller

DANCERS like Patricia Miller are always being compared to Dresden china which must be a poor consolation for aching limbs, classrooms and intense fatigue. They must look upon the critic literally as a bull in a china shop, and who indeed could blame them ? But Patricia Miller's dancing is so fragile, brittle and elegant that it is difficult not to reach for the same worn metaphor.

Her quality is unmistakable : she has great charm and a kind of unconscious sophistication, while the sweetness of her expression never becomes either coy or cloying. Her range is limited.

One cannot imagine her either in high melodrama or broad farce ; she has no great powers of characterisation, not a style befitting large-scale ballets.

One cannot see her exuding sex-appeal like Jeanmaire or prancing around in an uninhabited ballet like *L'Oeuf a la Coq* or *Ballabile*. But within these limitations she is an enchanting dancer with an unusual piquancy more common among French than British artists.

Her freshness and sparkle are a welcome relief after so many young dancers who sedulously ape the grand manner or rely upon a too facile charm to cover their technical limitations.

* * *

Patricia Miller, like her fellow South African Nadia Nerina, dances with real spontaneity and conveys to her audience her delight in movement. One realises that she enjoys dancing, which is not (as some other dancers suggest) a form of hard labour to be endured only for the pay packet and the possibility of an early marriage.

Photographed by
DEREK SMITH

Commentary by
RICHARD AUSTIN

She has been fortunate to have had John Cranko to mount several ballets around her, because he understands her potentialities and has been able to exploit her charming personality in a way no other choreographer would have done.

In *Beauty and the Beast* Cranko devised a role which suited her wistful beauty to perfection ; her performance was a superb miniature full of the most touching subleties of expression.

Her dancing is on a small scale, neat, crisp and precise ; and for that reason she was rather out of her depth in Cranko's latest ballet *The Lady and the Fool*, where she was given a ballerina role of the greatest complexity which really demanded a dancer in the grand manner and not a soubrette.

As with all her roles she made it personal to herself—a small, beautifully finished cameo, rather than the large scale portrait a more dominating stage personality might have produced.

* * *

In a company which contains few personalities Patricia Miller stands out immediately. With her small build, gold hair and greenish eyes she is unusually pretty ; and she has been able to exploit these natural gifts with a conscious artistry which has done much to establish the reputation of the Theatre Ballet.

She would be lost on the vast stage of Covent Garden, but at Sadler's Wells she has found the ideal frame for herself and in doing so has added new lustre to that great organization.

Portrait by June Ryan *Text by Richard Austin*

Yvette Chauvire

PERHAPS the most disappointing feature of the recent season by the Paris Opera Ballet was the manner in which so great an artist as Yvette Chauvire was wasted on ballets wholly unworthy of her. It was impossible to recognise the Chauvire of Giselle; she appeared so heavy and badly-placed, so lacking in fluidity and poetry. Of course she had great speed, precision and authority; but nothing else is needed to interpret (if such a word can be used, the crushing banalities of Lifar's choreography.

It was typical of the whole season that on the first night Chauvire's entrance was greeted by applause, but as the empty, unmusical acrobatics of Suite en Blanc progressed this enthusiasm was replaced by an air of baffled disappointment which filled the theatre and there remained, almost unbroken, throughout the fortnight. One would like to forget Chauvire, hideously costumed, vainly trying to give meaning to the jejune choreography of Nauteos; and Chauvire, the great actress, attempting to project some emotion into Les Mirages. These empty dances, so lacking in imagination, without emotional content or design are unworthy of her or of any great ballerina.

NO OPPORTUNITY

There was no opportunity either of seeing Chauvire, the pure classical ballerina, as she dominates the great stage of the Paris Opera with her glacial, disdainful grandeur. For it is surprising that, while her Giselle has such warmth and tenderness, in other classical roles she has an icy, remote perfection which must recall Trefilova to older balletomanes. Her line is flawless, of sculptural beauty; her arms have a wonderful pliancy and nobility; her carriage has a regal splendour. She has none of the vulgar showmanship and irritating mannerisms of so many French dancers; she is impersonal, aloof, every inch the ballerina assoluta conscious of her great inheritance.

But it is Chauvire's Giselle that is the true measure of her greatness. Her performance is imbued with the spirit of Nineteenth Century Romanticism, re-creating, line by line, the lithographs of a vanished age. She lingers in the mind like a phantom conjured up from the ballets of long ago, to haunt us with their unique beauties.

With these memories of Chauvire as one has seen her in Paris and as a guest artist in London, it was depressing to discover how she was presented in London a ballerina of such quality forced into ugly poses and thrown away on empty variations. French ballet owes an incalculable debt to Lifar for his inspiration and his enthusiasm, but it is difficult to forgive him for rendering so poor a service to France's greatest ballerina.

MARGOT **Fonteyn, Ninette de Valois** and **Donald Alberry** have formed a tax-free, non-profit-making theatrical production company, Independent Plays Ltd. **Alberry** is the son of Sir Bronson and owns three West-end theatres, the New, Criterion and Wyndhams.

Independent Plays Ltd. will be in direct competition with Hugh Beamont's Tennant Productions (recently attacked in the press for its stranglehold on the London theatre and its use of tax-free status).

The coming together of Sadler's Wells' major director, major attraction, and the theatrical family gave rise to many speculations in London during November. Can **de Valois** be a partner to running ballet in competition to the Wells ? Hardly. Does she intend leaving the Wells, with **Fonteyn**, and starting out on her own ? Unlikely. And nobody was answering questions.

VIOLETTA **Elvin** has again been invited by **La Scala,** Milan, to dance there. And, of the greatest interest, she will dance in a new production of *The Firebird* which will be mounted for La Scala by the same group which gave Sadler's Wells its production. The question must immediately arise : if **Elvin** can originate this role for such a theatre as La Scala—why has she not danced it for the Wells ? So far the role has been kept strictly for **Margot Fonteyn,** even to the exclusion of an understudy. If **Fonteyn** is ill the ballet is cancelled, unless someone can learn the part at a moment's notice !

The point is obvious : **Elvin** should dance the *Firebird* in London. Now.

TWO new ballets come into the Wells' repertoire this month, on the sixth. One is to Malcolm Arnold music, the composer of the music for *Homage*, last year's Ashton ballet. This work, *Rinaldo and Armida* is a medieval tale of Crusader, a Sorceress and an Enchanted Girdle. The other, also by Frederic Ashton, is to Benjamin Britten's Purcell variations which are known as the *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra.*

For Ashton a double triumph or a resounding, repeated failure. But whichever way it goes on the night, a confident and admirable gesture by a choreographer who is not afraid to undertake in eight weeks what might be a year's work for another.

ALICIA **Markova,** recently in The United States, France and Portugal, will return to New York after the current Festival-hall season.

In New York she will complete the season as prima ballerina at the Metropolitan Opera House.

NEXT month **Domini Callaghan** and **Michel de Lutry** are to lecture at Glasgow Ballet Club. Recently the two American dancers **Suzanne** and **Knox Fowler** demonstrated their technique to the club. The dancers are, I'm told, studying at Glasgow's RADA, the College of Dramatic Art.

Arise

A COMMENTARY ON

NORA **Kovach and Istvan Rabovsky** appeared on the CBS-TV "spectacular" Omnibus programme last month, a major advertisement pointer for Festival Ballet's American tour. In the first three weeks of the company's tour the box-office has grossed sixty thousand pounds, despite the hurricane intervention.

SURPRISINGLY all American ballet seems to be in boom this year. From New York City Centre I hear that the advance ticket sale for *Casse*—which is being presented as a theatrical show on a long-run policy and not, as is normal in ballet, as a part of a repertoire—is well over thirty-five thousand pounds. The run of *Casse* will be six or seven weeks, an unprecedented achievement in ballet.

I long ago wrote that ballet must, sooner or later, stage full productions in a normal theatrical run, and not as parts of repertoire. In New York the point is being proven by one of the few theatre craftmen in ballet, **George Balanchine.**

LUCIA **Chase,** asked how ballet companies pay their way, replied by talking of her school, a forthcoming book, television, records and a possible film. She did not mention playing to live audiences in theatres. Sign of the times ?

JOAN *of Arc at the Stake*, the Bergman-Rossellini-Henoger oratorio recently seen at the Stoll, will be available here as a colour film early this year. Whereas most Italian films have their titles translated into English, it would seem probable that this one will play safely and retain its original name. But, to warn innocent readers, **Giovanna D' Arco Al Rogo** is Joan of Arc at the Stake.

Thinking of titles, the Rank cinemas were careful not to taint their advertising with the

E BALLET MONTH

name Shakespeare while selling *Romeo and Juliet*. And how right they were. Glasgow's art cinema, the Cosmo, billed the author quite prominently. Result : run suspended after six days, complete failure.

"IN August 1953" writes **Monique Journoud** "a small French theatre company called "Jeux D'Artifice", whose producer was **Michael Eugene Ferrand,** started from Lyon its usual summer tour to the Mediterranean coast of France. . .

Including myself, there were only three boys and three girls sharing a hard adventurous life, going from place to place in a shabby old car, which we had to push up hills. To make up for this uncomfortable existence though were the beauty of Provence and the gorgeous colours of the Mediterranean. Although the company presented plays, there was very little speech, and in my 37 weeks with them I did only Ballet and mime.

What was the type of play presented by this company ? First, a Medieval French comedy called *La Farce du Pate*. This was a coarse and simple play, with lighthearted music specially composed for our benefit. Our next play was an Italian one, done in the style of the *Commedia D'ell Arte*, with the traditional characters of Celio, Pantoloon, Harlequin and Columbine.

I myself played Columbine, and enjoyed the part in which I was a young coquette, dancing and disdaining every man's love, until I was finally subdued and taken away by Harlequin.

The last play in our repertoire, was a French *Vaudeville* of the nineties. Here I gave several solo dances, with my friend from England, who had come specially for the purpose, playing piano. For this play we had worked out between us two extracts from *Gounoud's Faust*, a Russian dance on Moussorgski's *Gopak*, and finally a sailors' dance. A rare record was the accompaniment to the sailors' dance.

These were our plays ! The places we played at ? They ranged from theatres to Village halls and we did play once at a T.B. hospital for priests. The work was hard, but the pleasure we received so great that we all hope to repeat the experience in the future."

ONE new company seems likely for London this year—that of **Ciro Rimac.** This South American dance revue leans heavily on mambo and are, at the moment in Paris at the Moulin Rouge.

TRADITIONS being ever-popular, a new one has grown up in New York. There the belief is that the critics' wives can tell a hit from a miss. And persistent first-nighters now watch to see which wives miss which shows. A recent opening found every major critic minus partner at the opening and the show was dead within days.

Would this apply in London ? Certainly not in ballet, too few of us have wives. But, to give the tradition a start I will admit that mine found *Cafe des Sport* "refreshing, fun" on the first night. We will now wait patiently to see whether the theatre burns down or has a new success on its hands !

WE have support ! The title of new book being written by **Oliver Sayler** is "*Ballet is Theatre*".

THE photograph of the ballet dress shown on this page illustrates an interesting development. For the first time, in my experience at least, a major fashion designer has prepared and displayed a classical tutu costume.

Michael Sherard, one of the London "Top Twelve", is having this dress made in his own workshops to special order and displayed the model illustrated here at the Fashion and Fabrics Fair recently.

ON Saturday, January 1, **Beryl Grey** returns to Covent Garden and will dance *Odette/Odile*. On the 20th *Checkmate* is again being given, this time with **Beryl Grey.** On the 22nd, at the matinee, **Elaine Fifield** will dance *Swanhilda* for the first time with the company.

In one of the new Ashton ballets I mentioned above, **Svetlana Beriosova** will be partnered by **Michael Somes.** This is *Rinaldo*. The other, *Variations on a Theme of Purcell*, will feature **Nerina, Fifield and Jackson,** with **Alexander Grant.**

Matinee prices, incidentally, are now well below evening performance prices. Orchestra stalls are 16/- and 13/- compared to £1 and 17/6d. and other seats are depriced accordingly. An excellent idea, now we may have larger audiences for the younger dancers who often appear at matinees.

THE designer for one of the new ballets is **Snow.** The designer for the other is **Rice.** Does Covent Garden foresee a winter wedding ?

The Sherard costume—modelled by Lilliane—is admired here by Archie Andrews and his lap, Peter Brough. See story on this page.

THE new Jack Hylton revue, *Talk of The Town at the Adelphi*, is an expensive production. Costumed lavishly, it also boasts several clever sets.

Only the comedy, in fact, lets the show down with **Jimmy Edwards** the unchangeable, **Tony Hancock** the harnessed and **Joan Turner** repeating her Yna Sumac act.

Wisely the producer—**George Black**—has brought in the Tiller Girls for his chorus and their appearance and working are excellent. **Page and Bray,** two cafe-ballroom type dancers, show some originality and are paced well. The dance staging in general is unimaginative, but the overall lushness should carry the show.

DANCE to Freedom, the film re-enactment of their escape made by **Istvan Rabovsky** and **Nora Kovach,** is to be released—at last. Republic will handle theatrical distribution of the film which was made in Germany by the U.S.I.A. in 1953.

ISTVAN **Rabovsky,** with **Nora Kovach,** is to join Ballet Theatre after the completion of their tour with Festival Ballet in the United States. BALLET TO-DAY readers will remember my hinting of this possibility immediately I heard that **Hurok**—Rabovsky's manager—had taken over Ballet Theatre's tour. Other news from Festival Ballet is that *Esmeralda* is to be dropped from the repertoire after this tour. **George Jackson** writes a full report on the American reaction to the company, in the next issue.

THE article on **Moira Shearer** in the last issue was written by **Pigeon Crowle,** the byline was dropped after the page had been passed for press . . . . **Leslie Caron** will, after *Daddie Long-Legs*, make a new version of *Waterloo Bridge* . . . . . **Violetta Elvin** started in the Politiken Gala (sponsored by the newspaper on behalf of poor children) in Copenhagen on December 12. **Margot Fonteyn** and **Yvette Chauvire** have previously appeared at this event . . . Why did **Elvin** not appear on the first nights at Covent Garden ? A great many balletgoers must have anticipated with pleasure seeing her again after her continental successes . . . . **Colette Marchand** is to be ballerina of the new Oriental tour by the Paul Szilard Ballet which will, this time, feature a Japanese corps de ballet . . . . **Fred Astaire** is to make The New Orleans Story for 20th-Fox . . . . **Leonide Massine** has restaged *Mam'zelle Angot* for Ballet Theatre . . . . .

Your Child in Ballet

The Pembroke Magazine said:

"THIS of course, is the book which every parent with a daughter who wants to dance has needed. An expert to put into perspective such points as ballet as a career, the chances of success, the need for some form of assistance for parents who cannot afford London teaching for their talented children."

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Books

THEATRECRAFT: the A to Z of Show Business. By Harald Melvill. (Rockcliff, 21*s*)

This book should be invaluable to all amateur dramatic societies or groups interested in the art of the theatre, as well as everyone who would like to know exactly how things work behind the scenes. The author knows the theatre well from both sides of the proscenium arch, and from his early training with the famous Neilson-Terry Company, through the rep companies and pantomimes with flying ballets, to the "little" theatres and the West End.

He deals expertly with all the work of management, from director to call boy; and as actor, stage manager, designer, and technician, there seems to be no branch of the theatre that he cannot discuss from the practical view-point, plainly and well, and with plenty of dry, amiable humour.

There is a foreword by John Clements, with whom Melvill, as designer, has long been associated a full glossary of theatrical terms, explanatory drawings, and a number of excellent photographs.

Ballerinas of Sadler's Wells. By Hugh Fisher. (A. & C. Black, 6*s*.)

A pleasant and economical addition to these publishers' *Dancers of Today* series, as it contains a short study of the career and art of Ninette de Valois, Alicia Markova, Pearl Argyle, Margot Fonteyn, Mary Horner, Pamela May, Beryl Grey, Moira Shearer, Violetta Elvin, Nadia Nerina, Rowena Jackson, Svetlana Beriosova, and is illustrated with many photographs.

Theatre World Annual, No. 5. By Francis Stephens. (Rockcliff, 18*s*.)

A useful and enjoyable record and review, plentifully and well illustrated with photographs, of London West End productions. The period covered is from 1st June, 1953 to 31st May, 1954, and includes cast lists, a table of lengths of runs, and a small section on the chief events in ballet and opera.

P. C.

Violetta Elvin writes . . .

★

A monthly column by Sadler's Wells Ballerina Violetta Elvin.

SEVERAL readers wrote to ask me how they could learn about more dancing and join in ballet activities in the communities in which they live. They told me how unhappy they were that, apart from occasional performances by visiting ballet companies and a lecture on ballet now and then, there was no way for them to be in touch with other young people likewise interested in ballet.

To meet this difficulty I would advise joining a ballet club. And if there isn't a ballet club in your town, why not join with some of your friends to form one? You can then arrange for meetings and discussions in which you can participate as often as you like.

I think this would be a fine way for many of you to become more closely acquainted with ballet and your favourite dancers.

YOUR CLUB

To obtain a clearer picture of this idea for you I spoke to Mr. G. B. L. Wilson, the Chairman of the Association of Ballet Clubs. He explained to me that the Association is an international body which has more than fifty affiliated clubs throughout Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden and Canada.

I learned that your club could join this organisation by paying the yearly fee of £1. And for this the Association will help you with advice and, among other things, arrange for film shows and for speakers for your club.

There are now about 2500 members who belong to ballet clubs in Britain alone. Perhaps the most important of these clubs are in London (biggest, the London Ballet Circle), in Nottingham, Leeds, Newcastle, Glasgow, and at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

PERFORMANCES

Two general meetings take place at the Royal Academy of Dancing each year with club delegates gathering there from all over the world. And after their deliberations they join in a body to attend a performance of the Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden, if our company is in town.

Moreover, you might like to know that you can apply to become a member of the Association of Ballet Clubs as an individual if there is no ballet club near where you live. For a yearly membership fee of only five shillings you can keep in touch with all the Association is doing.

Why not write to Miss Christine Greenfield, Secretary of the Association of Ballet Clubs, 20 Dean Road, London, N.W.2, if you want to know more about its many activities.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

In the February **Ballet Today**

THE cover of the next issue of BALLET TODAY is an example of a completely new process with which we have been experimenting. The actual photograph was taken by the famous Paris photographer Rubin De Rays who has agreed to have us publish a number of his photographs in coming months.

The effect of the photograph is completely novel and very attractive. The process has not before been used by a dance magazine nor, with one or two exceptions, by any other British magazine.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

IDEAL BALLERINA *From Page 10*

priate to its setting, but there is trip tinsel and the jewels are not made of paste.

Great dancing is sculptured music, and it is the object of my ideal ballerina to shape the music with her limbs so that it is absorbed within her and takes on a visible form. It envelopes her in its radiance, and at its heart, in absolute serenity, her dancing besides. She appears to absorb the music as a flower half-opened absorbs the sunlight ; as a flower now fully opened displays its splendour, the sunlight distilled in its golden repose.

My ballerina shapes the melodic line as a great sculptor shapes his stone according to the principles of its nature, because, like all true artists, she has the same reverence for her material. That is also the secret of her qualities as an actress. Her mime is not something artificial, but arises from a genuine emotion. It is not imposed but experienced. There is no grimacing to express an emotion—rather each emotion finds its moving and logical expression.

The music casts its reflection on her face, shading it, brightening it, like the play of sunlight on water. This gives her face a strange radiance, as though lit from within, leading one to undiscovered worlds of the imagination. She allows her audience to share a private vision, enticing them to those enchanted gardens and moonlit palaces about which Tchaikowski must have dreamed as he wrote the "Panorama" music of *The Sleeping Beauty*.

Under the response to the music her movements seem to ripple and shimmer ; they have a grave eloquence, curiously self-absorbed, seen at times as through a luminous haze surrounded her, so completely is she a part of the music.

When my ballerina steps on to the stage one realises that here, before she has even begun to dance, is the *ballerina assoluta*. In repose she will suggest a concealed power and authority which gives to the audience a sense of controlled emotion and hidden fire. When she moves there is a rustle of excitement in the theatre and then a great silence as her dance begins.

Lightness is not all. If a dancer cannot perform the steps properly it matters little whether she weighs seven stones or twelve ; but, of course, my ballerina moves lightly and with elegance. She does not suggest a wraith or disembodied spirit : indeed she is full-blooded and far from disembodied. She has great allure, and she will excite one's emotions while at the same time remaining unattainable. She is, in fact, the prototype of *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* and a hundred others—symbols which have occupied the secular dreams of humanity since the dawn of history. (Erudite readers, as you are all, will have confirmed this in your study of Jung and Frazer).

She also gives the impression that she enjoys dancing. While her sense of dedication is genuine, so also is her sense of humour, and she will never become pompous on or off the stage. She has great natural modesty and complete self-confidence ; she does not believe in displays of "temperament" and will not tolerate them from others.

The last thing of all is this : that while she has been a great ballerina for many years, acclaimed throughout the world, she is able to subdue her powerful personality, deliberately control her authority and attack when a ballet requires it. For she is not a "star" but an artist conscious of a great inheritance which is her's to enrich, but not to exploit.

It will be objected that my ideal-dancer bears a considerable rel semblance to one great ballerina, known and admired by us all. I cannot help that : it still remains a portrait of my ideal ballerina, however much reality may have intruded.

RICHARD AUSTIN

A Serge Lido shot of the de Cuevas Ballet in the new Romola Nijinska ballet Concerto de Chopin: Marjorie Tallchief (left) and new arrival Genia Melikova.

Au fait, le dit-on ?

DANCE is said to be the origin of all art. Could one say so really? Perhaps it is just imagination. In any case, I believe it is so.

Art is a race against death; dance the thrown guantlet to gravity. The source of art is joy; dance is before all a flowering extraversion. Whoever experiences this state of joy, this inner expansiveness can no longer hesitate to dance. It is an extension of our proper limits; an intoxicating excursion beyond our meagre frontiers. My heart all swollen, petrifies my blood and sends it bullet-like to finger tips, my feet, and my throat; my back bends completely, I stretch myself out and feel uplifted by I cannot say what mysterious enthusiasm.

Yes, dance is enthusiasm personified, incarnate, a full blooded joy. Take my dog when he decides to play, he dances. All animals dance and all men, who look to excel themselves to express themselves dance as well, like animals.

YES dance really is the ancestor of the arts, if not historically (this point of erudition I leave to others being of little importance after all) then in the order of things.

Dance ought to be as natural to man as desire; as moving nourishing, and virulent as love. Before interpreting that which I love, I identify myself with what I love, I become the beloved object, and I dance.

Dance therefore appears as the purest projection of all that in us which is love and desire. And when with closed eyes I represent a ballerina, I see her on points, arrested at the moment of a pose, dominating elfinlike a superb "ralenti," a movement as slow as the flow of life.

And I love her, as I love life, as I love love and desire.

JEAN-LOUIS BARRAULT

quoted from the introduction to the new Serge Lido 'Ballet' folio of photographs.

VIOLETTA ELVIN, in her column last month, was made to refer to Italian ballet before 1936. This should have read "before 1946". I apologise for this error slipping through.

THE publishers of *Your Child in Ballet* have decided to make this guide booklet an annual affair and a new version will appear on December 1 of each year in future, entitled *Child in Ballet Yearbook*. The first printing was almost fully sold out prior to publication date.

The London Ballet Year: 1954

A BRIEF ANNUAL SUPPLEMENT COVERING THE YEAR IN LONDON

by

Peter Craig-Raymond

THE London dance year—how can one draw conclusions from it? If ever an art seemed to move without a goal, "British ballet" is that art.

At Sadler's Wells the problem of what to do with two dancers who cannot fail to embarrass the rest of the company remains unsolved. Neither Violetta Elvin nor Svetlana Beriosova fit the company and, assuming that parents visit the Opera House, both give the Wells School an uphill task in explaining why it is that the two non-Wells dancers should put the rest to shame.

The embarrassment is rather that of the ship in which all but two passengers caught typhoid, and the two were those who had refused immunisation!

The final test will come when Margot Fonteyn, to please the *Sunday Graphic* if not herself, eventually retires. Can the several quite incredible moves which have been made in the Wells to establish an official position for dancers refused either public or professional acclaim be repeated in appointing a successor to Fonteyn and the other upmoving changes which this succession will entail?

Will official ballerinas become official prima ballerinas? Or will we add a new title to the list: Prima Ballerina (Eng.), so completing the picture?

THE French brought us the two best new ballets of the year—the masterpiece *Idylle* by George Skibine with the de Cuevas Ballet, and the experimental *Les Algues* with the Janine Charat Ballet. Also from de Cuevas—who thus becomes our most enterprising import—came Taras' *Piege de Lumiere*. At home we had to use our praise only upon a revival, *The Firebird*. And here we have only been allowed to see Margot Fonteyn in the title role. And, fine as was her portrayal, there seems no reason why Elvin has not also danced the role.

The de Cuevas season, which opened on January 18, served as an aperitif to a meal which never came. Like melon, we could have had it for dessert, too.

On January 24, before a private audience, Kenneth Macmillan's *Laiderette* proved the choreographer's potential. Needless to say nothing resulted from this. But, for Maryon Lane and David Poole, the ballet was an excellent vehicle.

ANTONIO returned to London during February, bringing with him his new partner, Rosita Segovia and—of greater interest—a true flamenco dancer, Flora Albaicin. Antonio and Rosita were to be seen at the end of the year, too, in *Neapolitan Fantasy*—for less than a minute in this overfull film.

Nadia Nerina broke through the slough of Sadler's Wells to create a lively, gay Swanilda for Ninette de Valois' revised production of *Coppelia*.

The season so long promised by modern dancer Martha Graham came and went in a chaos of opposed overstatements. Graham is either passionately defended (why "defended" incidentally? Is the very description revealing?) or thoroughly loathed. Her work provided me with an analogy I have been using all year. Whenever I am shown something pretentious, ridiculous, pessimistic or neurotic I think of that Bedlam at the Saville.

In eight years of writing on the dance I have never before made the mistake I perpetrated with Graham: I welcomed her arrival as an important event.

Which proved I can be wrong—which I knew well already—and proved, also, that I approached Graham without prejudice. So far nobody has granted me this second claim.

John Cranko's new ballet, *The Lady and the Fool*, came into the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet repertoire during February and was welcomed. A pleasant, thoughtless trifle—but a well-made ballet.

THE Janine Charat season during April was a badly programmed one, and yet held some ballets and a surprising number of artists of the greatest interest. Charat herself is a sensitive, feminine dancer and, with her, she brought Rene Bon, Jean Babilee and Peter van Dijk. To a London starved of male dancing April became a month of highlights.

Of the ballets presented, *Les Algues* held the greatest interest. Babilee's *Le Jeune Homme* was restaged as for a second touring company, and only Peter van Dijk was unanimously praised.

During the month I had a recorded argument with Edith Barking in which I buried ice ballet. Since then Claude Langdon and his ice shows have, if possible, played to even greater audiences and for longer runs.

BY June we had seen the "coming out" of the year—Svetlana Beriosova's *Aurora*. Neither the public, nor the management have yet recovered. The one is still adulating, the other has applied a well-tried brake.

Festival Ballet arrived in July with as extraordinary an event as Christmas would have been: a revival of *Esmeralda*. As at Christmas, only a few of us placed candles on the window-sill. But the ballet did prove that Nicholas Beriozoff, given a ballet to create rather than a museum to refurbish, might well have success.

With Festival Ballet came Belinda Wright dancing even better inside the limitations she seems to have placed deliberately upon herself, John Gilpin definitely improved and at times dancing really well, Nora Kovach to make *Zoebide* live, and Istvan Rabovsky to make ballet itself live.

Harald Lander staged a disastrous copy of his own *Napoli*, and Oleg Briansky again failed to find the role which he needs to show his fine dancing.

Ballet Rambert at the Sadler's Wells Theatre brought Lola Montez into the repertoire to provide well-staged humour and Audrey Nicholls became noticeable as of probable future interest. This company returned to London in November to stage a poor *Giselle* although both Beryl Goldwyn and Alexander Bennett danced well.

Sadler's Wells Ballet commemorated Diaghilev by reviving *Boutique Fantasque*, *Le Tricorne* and staging a new production of *Firebird* for Margot Fonteyn. The *Firebird* is one of the roles which should have been revised for Fonteyn years ago and both she and the general production established the ballet's new success.

During the year several non-ballet companies such as the Spanish Etorki and the Japanese dancers have also appeared in London to little effect. Peter Daubeny, having broadened his scope, has bothered less with ballet and London has suffered for it. The Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet brought Rodrigues' *Cafe des Sports* to London for November and two Soviet dancers, Raissa Struchkova and Alexander Lapauri, again showed what British ballet lacks through politics and what British audiences lack through equally muddled, if more internationally present, politics.

Serge Lifar brightened the winter by at last bringing the Paris Opera Ballet to Covent Garden.

IN a year of surprises, it was perhaps to be expected that Yvette Chauvire would fail to please in London and that younger dancers would hold the audiences. If the triumph was for Micheline Bardin, others shared the stage. And a man, Raol Bari, came into notice.

The year lacked many things. We could have been interested by the New York City Ballet, and Roland Petit might well have repeated his 1953 success here. The Helsinki Ballet might have pandered to my rumour and arrived. Jose Greco could have returned. But none of these things happened.

Perhaps, ending the year on a rather ersatz diet, I can list what I hope to see in London in 1955. In no order of preference, merely of first inclination.

New York City Ballet, Ballet Theatre, Jose Greco, Roland Petit, de Cuevas, a reformed Charat Ballet, and perhaps one or two other Continental opera ballets. Apart from these—a Sadler's Wells devoted to ballet rather than to nationalism and indoctrination. A Theatre Ballet as gay as possible. Festival Ballet given stronger direction and an Anton Dolin ready to make or break the company to get what he wants. And a Ballet Rambert with more money and some outside acquisitions.

After these: just a month of ballet from either or both of the Moscow and Leningrad Ballets.

Having asked all this I will end 1955 disappointed—but even to have a few of my hoped for arrivals will make the year worthwhile. I hope it is.

Discs

Wonderful New Choice for Your Token-Buying

Beryl Grey, John Field in Lac des Cygnes

THERE is a wonderful choice of some first class recordings of ballet music for those who have money or tokens for Christmas. The scope is wide and includes two *Carnavals* of the highest order but approached from opposite angles, two *Thamars* to remind you of Karsavina's greatest days, or else *Flamenco* from Iberia to match its proud and fiery dancing.

To commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Diaghilev's death, Columbia have brought out a presentation album, *Homage to Diaghilev*, consisting of three discs, 33CX1197-9. It covers a wide range from *Les Femmes de Bonne Humeur* to *Petrouchka*, and *Le Pas d'Acier* to *Kikimora*.

Diaghilev's genius recognised Markevitch's musical ability as long ago as 1929, so that it is most fitting that he should here conduct the Philharmonia, whose excellent performance is matched by excellent recording. Markevitch is crisp and clear—listen to his clever treatment of Satie's *Parade*.

He takes liberties with the scores here and there but quite rightly in a collection of this nature—some of his bridges are most ingenious. I feel this album should give the owner much enjoyment apart from a small criticism of the hurrying of the opening of *Le Spectre* and a larger one of *Swan Lake*.

Here tempi are in danger of destroying the balletic atmosphere. Also included are *L'Apres-midi* and excerpts from *Les Sylphides* and *Daphnis et Chloe*.

ANSERMET

Thamar was one of Karsavina's greatest dramatic roles and Fokine inspired by Balakirev's symphonic poem, created it for her. I prefer the Decca recording, LXT 2966, to that of Parlophone, PMC1009. Ansermet has a better grip on the work and gives life, colour and contrasts which Fistoulari does not appear to realise are there. Also the recording of the woodwind is more consistent and rounder.

There is yet another *Tricorne*—the two suites on one side of London TW 91013—and one worth noting. Argenta, conducting the Spanish National Orchestra, gives a good account of Falla's work, the one criticism being a slight lack of tension in the final Jota—the recording excels.

While still in Spain, there is a first class disc of *Flamenco*, TWV 91051. In recent years, there have been so many Spanish invasions with their unique and exciting singers, that I felt this record might admirably fill a possible gap in your collection.

Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique* was Massine's third ballet in his fight to establish the use of symphonic works. Monteux with the San Francisco S.O., gives a poetical rendering on HMV ALP 1137, which will meet the approval of most, in spite of some slight trouble in the recording of the woodwind.

Massine's *Labyrinth* for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo was set to Schubert's *Ninth Symphony* of which the Hallé under Barbirolli, HMV ALP 1178, gives a splendid rendering, carrying one's interest its entire length. The recording is occasionally slightly muffled but it is not serious. The third symphony record is that of Bizet's—the gay and exhilarating music of *Assembly Ball*.

Stokowski's recording, HMV ALP 1181, I prefer to Cluytens' on Columbia, which I reviewed last month. It makes Cluytens' sound a trifle heavy as though it had lost the sparkle and happiness that Stokowski gets from his players. The recording is satisfactory—not perfect but neither is Columbia's.

CAMPOLI

Concertos this month are on a high plane. Campoli's playing of Mendelssohn's with Beinum conducting, and Bruch's First with Kisch, Decca LXT 2904, has a charm which should melt even the hard bitten critics wanting additional firmness of attack.

In any case, do not be dissuaded by them—sit back and enjoy your fill. From the latter, Dolin drew the music for *Pas de Reve*.

Schumann's *Concerto* both Nijinska and Theilade choreographed. There are many who consider it very dull but have they heard a performance such as Gieseking's with the Philharmonia under Karajan, Columbia 33C1033. There is warmth and the greatest beauty to be found in the score, and they have the artistry to show it to us.

Anda's performance of Rachmaninov's *Second Piano Concerto*—Gore's *Winter Night*—with the Philharmonia under Galliera, Columbia 33 CX 1143, was not so inspired but it is nevertheless of a good standard and better than most. His playing of Dohnanyi's arrangement of Swanilda's waltz from *Coppélia* is delightful, Columbia SEL 1516. The recording of all these discs is extremely good.

This Brahms' *Variations on a Theme by Handel* is the one to acquire. The last recording I heard, was well played and brilliant but it had not the subtle contrasts and variety of tone that Moiseiwitsch gives on HMV CLP 1017. I find these the most attractive of any of this composer's variations and am not surprised that Nijinska chose them for her ballet, *Brahms Variations*. The theme for the *Paganini Variations*, also in her ballet, was taken from Paganini's *Caprice in A minor*, HMV 7EP7013. Ida Haendel is in good form, and plays Bartok's entrancing arrangement of *Roumanian Folk Dances* on the reverse side—you have not forgotten Alan Carter's *The Catch*!

BRITTEN

Another set of variations is Britten's on a theme of Frank Bridge, which was used for *Le Reve de Léonor* and *Jinx*, and Karajan's highly sensitive interpretation, Columbia 33CX1159, is superior to Boyd Neel's, Decca LXT 2790, but the pianissimos are so damped down that I had to turn up the volume, excessively for the forte passages—a serious drawback in this era of small rooms and flats.

Geza Anda's recording of *Carnaval*, Telefunken LGX 66029, is one of the most interesting things to which I have listened for sometime. It is quite unusual—one might say, modern in approach but in no derogatory sense. Listen to the great beauty and delicacy of Chiarina. To those who have heard this work too often—get this disc and be rejuvenated. However to live with, you may find that Bela Siki's romantic interpretation, Parlophone PMA 1022, will be your choice.

His lightness and enchanting turn of phrase brought to my imagination all the Dresden-figure charm of this great ballet. Could you not own both these discs—they are so different and very delightful.

Fauré is beautifully served by the Decca recording, LXT 2963. Both his *Ballade* and *Nocturnes* are played with much love and care by that fine exponent of his music, Kathleen Long—*Balade* is with the L.P.O., Martinon conducting. Frank Staff choreographed it for the shortlived New-Ballet Company. *Nocturne No. 7* opens Andrée Howard's fey ballet, *La Fete Etrange*, that needs several visits in order to assimilate the atmosphere fully. **B.C.**

MUSICIAN AT THE BALLET

—*From Page Eight*

The sabre dance *Tsourgugui no Mai* was mainly percussive but lacked grace, but this was agreeably followed by *Koboushi no Mai*, a touching theme based on a six hundred years old folk theme.

DERIVATIVE

Far from showing us how aged were their roots the Company's music effectively demonstrated its derivative origins. *Musume Dojoji*, the three seasons ballet was Western in its rhythms on wooded blocks.

While *Soranbushi* was twentieth century canned music at its lowest. A musical fantasy, *Koto*, exquisitely played on a zither-cum-harp by Konei Amada was strongly suggestive of nineteenth century Russia.

To all this add variants on castanets and tambourines and you have the full measure of Japanese music. Its origins lie everywhere other than Japan but I cannot deny the native charm and virtuosity with which these Japanese musicians put it over—even if the Princes Theatre tried to ruin the effect with its dreadful sound system.

CAFE DE SPORT

From East to Paris and a strong American influence. At the Sadler's Wells Theatre the new Rodrigues' ballet *Cafe des Sport* has an original score by Antony Hopkins whose music is full of allusions and quotations. It is an odd hotchpot of Duke Ellington, Gershwin, Rachmaninov, Strauss and Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

Somehow, however, the humour of Rodrigues in his dance does not percolate into the orchestral pit. And though conductor John Lanchbery danced and pranced as effectively as any ballet dancer, the strings often were ragged and the brass uneven. I am certain that this capable conductor would do well to recall the words of wisdom "Let not the conductor sweat ; let him make the audience perspire."

I was very glad that Verdi was dead when I sat through the performance of that horridly pretentious monstrosity *The Lady and the Fool.* (Sadler's Wells Theatre).

Unquestionably Charles Mackerras has cleverly arranged Verdi's music for ballet ; undeniably conducting the orchestra he produced some lovely sounds from the players.

But who could sit quietly and suffer some sublime music written for certain operatic moments distorted for humourous effect. Even the off stage band only added to my pain.

I was glad Toscannini was not sitting with me.

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diary

Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden

Dec. 23 : *Sylphides, Homage, Boutique Fantasque (Fonteyn, Nerina, Beriosova).*
27 : (*mat*) *Coppelia with Lindsay* ; (*eve*) *Coppelia with Nerina.*
29 : *Lac des Cygnes (Fonteyn, Somes)*
Jan. 1 : (mat) *Lac with Jackson.* (eve) *Lac with Beryl Grey.*
6 : *Angot, Rinaldo & Armida (premiere), Variations on a Theme of Purcell (premiere)*
7 : *Lac (Nerina, Rassine)*
8 : (mat) *Variation on a Theme of Purcell, Daphnis and Chloe, Rinaldo & Armida (Fonteyn).* (Eve.) *same programme*
11 : *Patineurs, Daphnis and Chloe, Ballet Imperial (Fonteyn)*
12 : *as for the 8th.*
15 : *Lac (Grey)*
18 : *Purcell, Ballet Imperial, Firebird (Fonteyn)*
20 : *Angot, Checkmate, Firebird (Fonteyn, Grey)*
22 : (mat) *Coppelia with Fifield* ; (eve) *Lac with Rowena Jackson and Michael Somes.*

Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet at S.W. Theatre

Dec. 27 : *Selina, Lady and Fool, Cafe*
29 (mat) : *Coppelia*
Jan. 1 (mat) : *Selina, Carte Blanche, Pineapple Poll*
5 : *Sylphides, Blood Wedding, Cafe*
8 (mat) : *Coppelia*

Yugoslav National Ballet at the Stoll

Jan. 24 : Short season, with full opera, ballet and orchestra contingent. On the first night Borodin's *Prince Igor* will be performed in full, the ballet company dancing the *Polovtsian Dances.* During the three week season the ballets *Romeo & Juliet, Ero The Joker, Devil in the Village and Gingerbread Heart* will be staged.

Pilar Lopez Ballet Espanol at the Stoll

Feb. 14 : Three week season.

Digest History of Ballet

Part Four

by Jay Norman

★

"The composer was usually the slave of the choreographer"

DURING the second half of the nineteenth century the main ballet scene shifted from France to Italy and Russia. The virtuosity of dancers trained at the Academy of Dancing at La Scala, Milan, enabled them to outrival those trained at the Paris Opera and in the Russian Imperial Schools.

Conditions were particularly favourable for the growth of ballet in Russia under the patronage of the Tsars and a state school, founded by the Empress Anne in the middle of the previous century and directed successively by Lande and Didelot, both French, was beginning to produce some fine dancers. In the three academies at St. Petersburg, Warsaw and Moscow, where discipline was very strict, equal attention was paid to both male and female dancers.

The best French choreographers and teachers, including Perrot and Saint-Leon, were attracted to Russia, and many of them began to model their training on that of the Italian school, and Italian dancers, such as Legnani, were imported to supplement the dancers from the Russian schools. One of the first Russian trained dancers to appear outside her own country was Andreyanova (1819-1857).

FASHION

The five or six act ballets which were the fashion at this time were vehicles for displaying the ballerina in *soli and pas-de-deux* with the corps de ballet as a background. Dances were sometimes omitted or added to suit the particular flair of individual dancers and such action as there was was carried on by scenes of mime. Costume for the danseuse invariably consisted of the tutu (a shortened version of the romantic calf length muslin dress).

Decor was in a rich, realistic style. Scores were trite and the composer was usually the slave of the choreographer. Successive maitre-de-ballet had concentrated on technical efficiency of the legs, often at the expense of port-de-bras.

In 1847, Marius Petipa arrived from France to take up the position of premier dancer, later to be appointed maitre-de-ballet. Petipa was a strict disciplinarian and under his tuition Russian dancers increased their virtuosity and technical efficiency and developed their style, and he used the corps de ballet as a training ground for soloists. During his fifty years in charge of the ballet he created a large number of new ballets and was responsible for nearly a score of revivals. The *soli and pas-de-deux* for the Princess Aurora in *La Belle Au Bois Dormant* probably show Petipa at his best as a choreographer, for they surely can never have been surpassed for brilliant exploitation of the classical technique.

BRIANZA

La Belle Au Bois Dormant was first given in St. Petersburg in 1890 with Carlotta Brianza as Aurora. *Le Lac Des Cygnes* was first produced in Moscow in 1877 with choreography by Julius Reisinger and was not a success.

It was not until after Tchaikovsky's death that Petipa produced it in Moscow, in 1895. That this ballet has survived is probably mainly due to the Tchaikovsky score and to the now well known collaboration of Petipa's assistant, Len Ivanov, who was chiefly responsible for the 'white' acts and who seems to have understood and responded to the music with a rare genius.

Dancers of this period included Marie Petipa, Muravieva and Bogdanova and among the men were C. P. Johannsen and N. Gertz. By the close of the century the supremacy of Russian dancers was unquestioned and gradually they ousted their Italian rivals. Many names, now famous, emerged from the Imperial schools, among them Pavlova, Kshesinskaya, Preobrajenskaya, Fokine, Legat and Mordkin. At the same time a critical spirit was abroad.

Artists began to feel the conditions and the repetitive, meaningless ballets sterile and depressing, and the time was ripe for new developments and experiments.

On the cover

ALICIA MARKOVA

A season in London—at the Festival Hall—and a new photograph by Serge Lido are excuses sufficient for a cover of Alicia Markova.

But, apart from printing these words upside down or in Technicolor . . . . what can the writer add to the story of Markova ?

She comes regularly home to London without a surprise, an innovation, a newsworthy note of any kind. Just herself—and the dancegoer apparently only needs to know the address of the theatre to ensure a packed house. Enough ? I think so.

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In addition, the school puts on full-length ballets like *Casse Noisette* or Hertel's *Vain Precaution* with the entire school taking part from beginners to members of the graduating class.

It was three years ago that Marina Kondratieva, Lyudmila Bogomolova, Nina Chistova, Gennady Lediakh and Boris Khokhlov graduated from the school and joined the Bolshoi company.

SOLO PARTS

They were not, of course, given important roles immediately. At the beginning they performed small solo parts, then pas-de-quatre, pas-de-trois and other dances. Their performances were excellent so the following spring, when the Soviet theatres held their annual festival of young talent, L. Lavrovsky, the theatre's chief maitre de ballet, assigned them leading roles.

Marina Kondratieva was given the title role in Prokofiev's ballet Cinderella—a part danced at the Bolshoi by some of the Soviet Union's greatest ballerinas—Ulanova, Lepeshinskaya and Struchkova.

INDEPENDENT

Without departing from the maitre de ballet's conception of the role, young Marina had to find colours and nuances that would indicate an independent approach to the part. She succeeded. Her Cinderella is simple and sincere, movingly naive, generous and noble. At the ball she is as poetic and charming, as kind and ingenious as she is in her stepmother's house.

Marina Kondratieva is very musical; her dancing is light and graceful. Her success as Cinderella prompted Zakharov to entrust her with Maria in the Pushkin ballet *Fountain of Bakhchisarai* by Boris Asafyev. Here, too, she was acclaimed. Her portrait of the young captive of the Crimean Khan is in soft tones.

LYRICAL

Kondratieva is better in the lyrical passages than at dramatic moments—lyricism and poetry are more part of her nature as a dancer. She performs the difficult variations, the adagio with Waclaw in Act I and with the Khan in Act III with assurance and precision.

I first saw Lyudmila Bogomolova some two years ago as Masha in *Casse Noisette*. It was a pleasure to see her youthful verve. One felt she was completely familiar with all the difficulties of the role and no longer thought about them. Her dancing was distinguished for its sincerity and warmth, combined with excellent technique. Only in the last act were there places where she displayed uncertainty.

Last year I again saw Bogomolova dancing Masha. Now she was much more experienced and had learned to distribute her strength properly. I joined with the audience in applauding her enthusiastically, taking pleasure in the technical polish of her dancing and the sweetness and sincerity that so distinguished her.

Last year I also saw Bogomolova as Madelon in Delibes ballet *Fadetta*. She correctly grasped the maitre de ballet's intention. In her dances she made Madelon slightly comic, immediately bringing the character alive.

Nina Chistova's dancing has also made a good impression. I have seen her as Princess Florida in *Sleeping Beauty*. Her movements are beautifully graceful, and she possesses much artistry and charm. It seems to me that in the future she should make an excellent Odette.

NOTEWORTHY

Gennadi Lediakh has a splendid command of the technique of the classical dance. This has helped him to achieve height and smoothness in his leaps and impeccable precision in pirouettes

He dances important solo parts in the famous "cavaliers" variations in *Sleeping Beauty* and *Raimonda*.

Not long ago he won noteworthy success as the Prince in *Cinderella*, a role to which he brought fiery, youthful temperament, energy, and tender lyricism, all qualities which this part requires.

As for Boris Khokhlov he is fine as the Prince in *Sleeping Beauty*. Besides this role, he dances small parts in a number of ballets, the same as the other young artists. Khokhlov possesses superb technique. His leaps are excellent, his movements smooth and elastic, and he gives capable support to his partner.

All this, together with a charming stage personality, make me think that Boris Khokhlov might easily be entrusted with big parts, particularly Romeo in Prokofiev's Shakespearian ballet.

I have spoken of only a very few of the young dancers at the Bolshoi Theatre. There are many other gifted young dancers in that famous company. The heads of the company confidently assign them responsible roles in which the young dancers are received enthusiastically by the public.

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